

Khaki  
and  
Cassock

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HENDERSON

Kenneth T. Henderson  
M.A., C.F.

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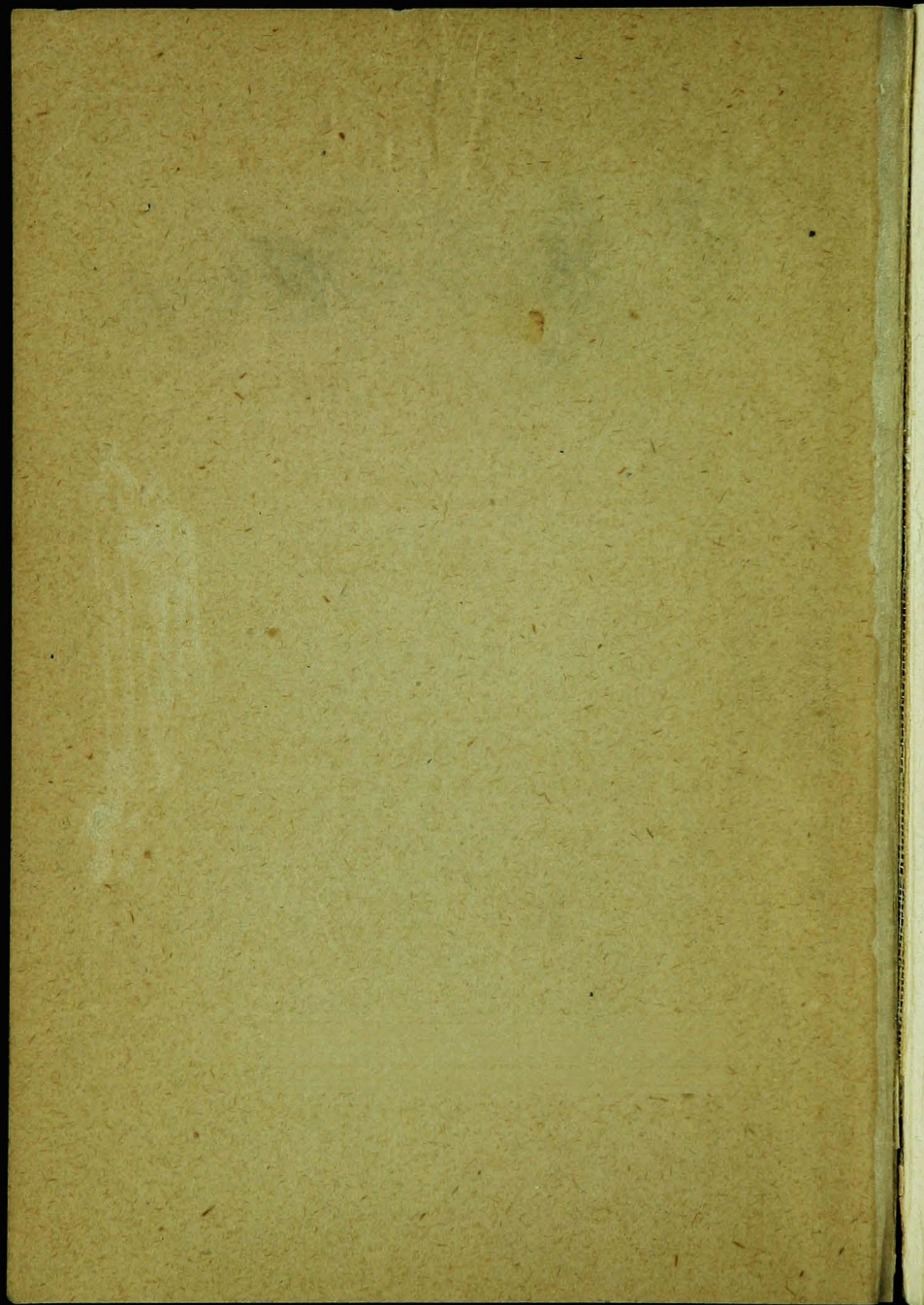
With kindest regards.

Edw. M. T. Henderson.

HAROLD WOODLANDS.

11 MAR 1940

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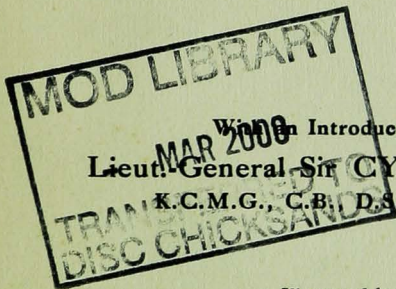
# Khaki and Cassock

By

KENNETH T. HENDERSON  
M.A., C.F.

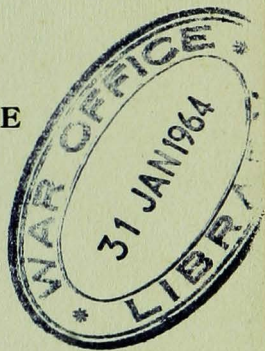
Sometime Lecturer in Philosophy, St. Paul's  
College, University of Sydney.

Late Chaplain 12th Infantry Brigade and  
1st Anzac Corps Troops, France.



With an Introduction by  
Lieut. General Sir CYRIL WHITE  
K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., P.S.C.

Illustrated by  
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Late 111th Howitzer Battery, A.I.F.



MELVILLE & MULLEN PTY. LTD.

262-264 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

1919

## Dedication



To My Beloved Brothers  
Lieutenant Alan Dudley Henderson  
Mortally Wounded in the Landing on  
Gallipoli, 25th April, 1915

AND

Captain Rupert Howard Henderson  
Killed shortly after taking over the Command of  
the remnants of the 6th and 7th Battalions  
at the conclusion of the Charge of  
the 2nd Brigade at Cape Helles  
8th May, 1915

Both of the 7th Battalion, 2nd Brigade,  
1st Division, A.I.F.



Australia to-morrow founds a tradition, God grant it  
may be a great one."

—(Taken from a letter written by Lieut. Alan Henderson  
during the night preceding the landing at Anzac)





CAPTAIN RUPERT HOWARD HENDERSON.



LIEUTENANT ALAN DUDLEY HENDERSON.



## PREFACE

I am glad of the opportunity to write a preface to this work of my friend and comrade, Chaplain Kenneth Henderson. It has been my privilege to read the book in proof, and I have discovered in it much which can only be the result of close observation and more which is clear-headed reflection upon experience.

It is well that the public should have placed before them other views of the Australian soldier than that merely of an incomparable fighting man. Not that Mr. Henderson has failed to pay due homage to the courage and resource of our men. But fighting is, after, all, but a small portion of the soldier's lot. There are many other tasks, and they all call for the display of some qualities if not that of courage. The greatest of these other qualities is probably fortitude—and the possession of fortitude may easily be a greater possession than courage. Certain it is that the bulk of the soldiers' tasks makes a greater demand upon fortitude than upon courage. In thinking of the soldier at work, too, how many of us realise the constant self-denial and the spirit of comradeship which go to make a fighting unit? A fighting individual is of little value; it is the association of individuals of the right quality in a body imbued with a co-operative ideal which has a military effect. It seems to me that there is a great lesson in this. We in Australia believe in the principle that this country is for us all, and we want to have it filled with happy contented people, from whose labour there is adequate return, and before whom there is, as far as possible, equal opportunity. That is the aim of democracy.

But that aim cannot be achieved except by organised effort upon a definite and high ideal under the guidance of men whose qualities fit them to be leaders and who are ready to educate, and not merely follow, public opinion. Democracy has only become possible by the spread of education, and in a country which has adopted democracy it is a bounden duty of its leaders to see that the people are educated in the truth and have ever before them the highest aims. Such a result cannot be achieved by words alone or without labour. It cannot be achieved without sacrifice. Every form of co-operation involves give and take and nearly always demands sacrifice. But if the necessary spirit was obtainable in the A.I.F., which comprised so large a portion of our manhood, and if 60,000 of Australia's best sons could give their lives for a cause, it is inconceivable that we should falter before the far less sacrifices which a peace ideal may impose upon us. Is it not, indeed, our bounden duty to those who have fallen that we see to it that Australia shall remember their sacrifice? They did not die that we should only attain victory over Germany and her allies. They died that the principles for which this Empire fought might be perpetuated in their own homeland. We shall be unfaithful to the trust they imposed upon us if, now that the war is over, Australia does not come to a happy and Christian maturity. Up to the time of this war we were merely an offshoot of the British race, possessed, fortunately, of the qualities of our forefathers, which made the Commonwealth of Greater Britain a possibility. Now we are a Nation; still a member of the Great Commonwealth, but a Nation with a history and with a developed patriotism. Nothing is impossible to us if we preserve the characteristics upon which our national spirit is based, and if we determine in our daily lives to respond to the challenge of the past. But let us be sure that we are perpetuating the qualities of our forefathers. It

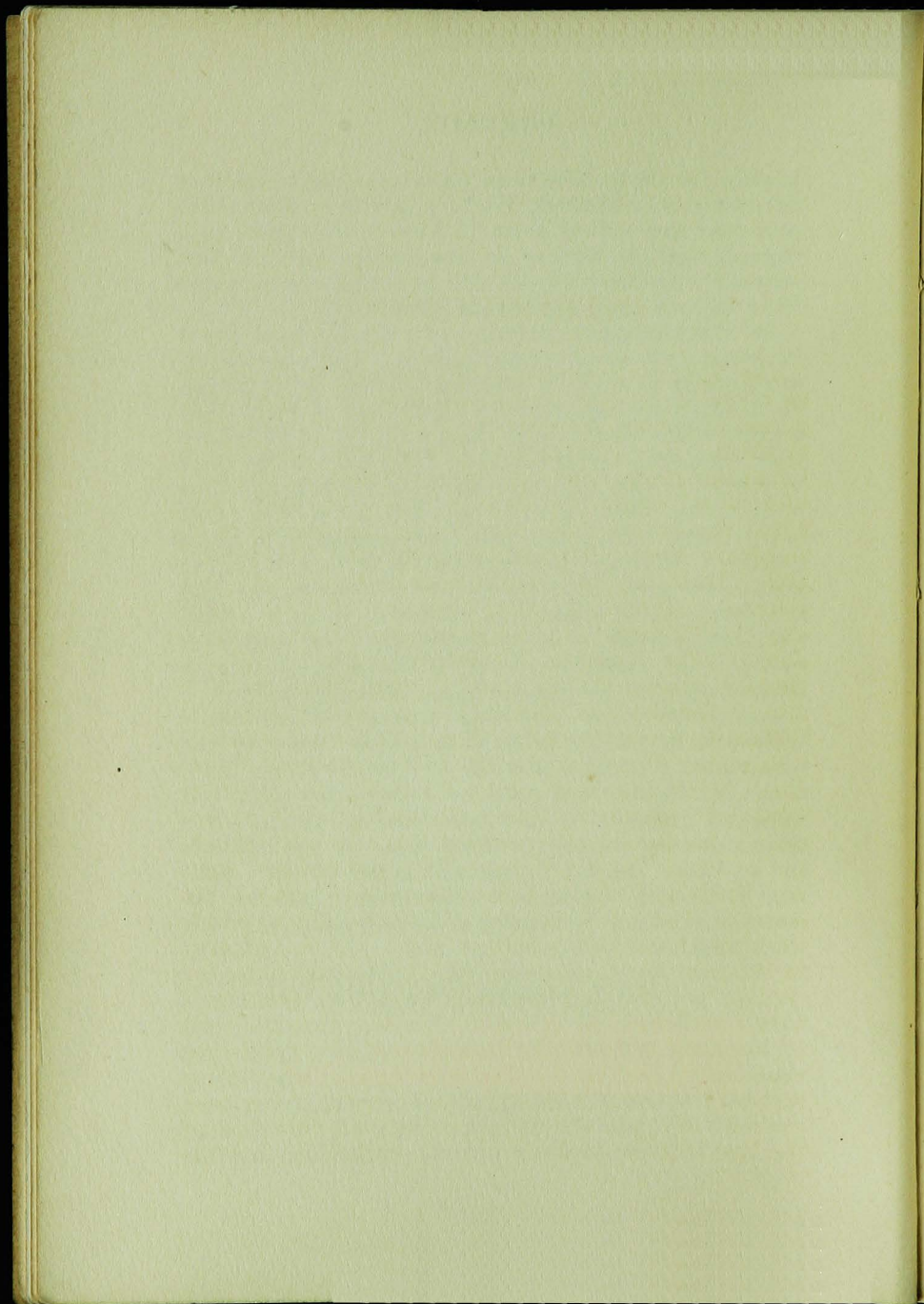


is easy for us to take unto ourselves credit which is not our due. Idleness, trickery, strife and ungodliness may for a time seem to have little effect; but, depend upon it, nature is inexorable, and in due course the children's teeth will be set on edge because their fathers have eaten sour grapes.

In this God-given country of ours we have great blessings and great opportunities. But abundance has defects as well as qualities. There is by reason of it often an objection to effort. It is right that people's lives should offer them a due meed of leisure and recreation, but it would be fatal were we to come to regard leisure and recreation as the main objects of our lives. The men of the A.I.F. know this. One other point. We are a small population in a great country. We can therefore do much that is impossible in densely populated countries. The fact should not, however, be allowed to induce us to grow selfish and introspective as is its tendency. We must ever seek a broad outlook and realise that our advantages impose upon us obligations to the rest of mankind.

I sincerely hope that Mr. Kenneth Henderson's book will be widely read. It shows fearlessly the many places which are weak in our character, and, without "looking too good or talking too wise," it indicates methods of remedy. Let us ponder over these and other remedies and see that they are applied. Let us retain the A.I.F. spirit at home, not in a political body, but in a great brotherhood united for the betterment of our Homeland and the Empire to which we belong.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CYRIL WHITE.





## INTRODUCTION

The following sketches of Australian character as revealed by war conditions were written over a period of nearly two years with the A.I.F. The first of them, "The Things One Remembers" and "The Usual Artillery Activity," were written in the bottom of a dug-out in Delville Wood in December, 1916; the others have been written in intervals of sick-leave since. The articles entitled "Discipline" and "Bush Types" have appeared in the Melbourne "Herald;" "The Usual Artillery Activity," "Things One Remembers," "A Padre's Job," "The Crossing," "Heavy Laden," "Where Empire Begins," "Through Thine Own Heart," also "Retreat at Sunset," in the "Argus;" "Washing Days," "Only a Mule," "Mont-des-Cats," "Marching Out," in the St. Peter's College Magazine, "Bill and Red go to Church" and "Army Theology" in the "Church Standard." They are mainly a record of personal experiences, though, as I have been interested in psychology since my University days, I have made an attempt to describe how the minds of some other people work in the cut-off world of war. It is not easy to do this for the general public, for between the civilian and the fighting man there is a great gulf fixed, impossible to bridge in words. Because most soldiers will not attempt to express their experiences coherently, the public has been given what it is supposed to want. Humour and heroism have been exalted, but one cannot appreciate the humour of the line without entering into the sufferings; nor the

courage, without entering into the physical fear. All I would claim for my work is that it is a consistent effort at exact truth. We have hitherto, in my opinion, been given a very one-sided view of the Australian. He is not merely a lusty animal and a great fighter. I have not attempted to do more than picture the facts as I saw them, and the facts I was mainly interested in were the facts of human nature; and the slightness of the treatment must be explained, if not excused, by the fact that they were nearly all written on sick-leave. I count myself exceedingly fortunate in being able to obtain the services of Bombardier Waller (who has lost his right arm on service) as the illustrator of this little book. He has entered thoroughly into the spirit of my intentions. We both believe that nothing can be more impressive than the facts. In the latter part of the book I have included a few attempts at some analysis of the spiritual facts which the war has created or revealed. These are based on my memories of many talks, for the padre being the only unofficial element in a very official world, is used as a sympathetic medium of expression by all sorts and conditions of men. But the atmosphere is too heavily charged with emotion and sentiment to attempt any detached analysis of the spiritual problems lit up by the war, and anything but an attempt at the whole truth, as far as one sees it, would be mere useless camouflage. The understanding of the effects of war on national character and outlook is a vital matter for the nation, but it is a tremendously difficult and complex task, stretching as far beyond the comprehension of any individual as the sea.

KENNETH T. HENDERSON,  
Late C.F. 1st Anzac Corps Troops.  
Collegiate School of St. Peter,  
Adelaide, 4/9/18.



## CHAPTER I.

### Things One Remembers

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#### FIRST TIME "UP."

The staff-captain had introduced him to his battalion staff and sent him back to the transport line, cutting short his objections, which had been conscientious, with an intimation that it was an order from the brigadier. But after the first night's peace he had felt it was not right somehow. Were they not his battalion, and were they not in the line? Not that he was looking for trouble. The first two nights spent in a trench by the side of a shelled thoroughfare had taught him how stretched nerves and aroused imagination could hurt. But this quiet life didn't seem right. Evening was coming down, and the rumble of the guns grew more distinct, as if they were waking to the night's work, as indeed they were. His half-formed hesitation took shape in a resolve to pay the battalion a visit. He went up to the top of the dug-out, and watched the great flashes lighting up the evening, listening to the mighty thunder, and gazing out over Nature desolate and agonised. It was so vast, so full of the mighty purpose of destruction. How could he commit his body to the keeping of these enormous forces? And his mind went back to the wife and two little babes, and the amount of the insurance money, and he remarked to himself,

rather bitterly, that it would not matter much to anyone there if he was killed. By this time he was making for the road. Next there flowed through his mind the words of his senior chaplain that it was often necessary to shut one's teeth and close one's mind to thoughts of home, which were the most dangerous thoughts of all. Was this one of those occasions? Surely not; the brigadier had distinctly told him not to go. Mustn't start by getting the brigadier's back up. But his battalion was in the line. Now he was among the first lot of howitzers, keeping to the middle of the track, and looking apprehensively over his shoulder, for they were firing salvoes.

Then past brigade headquarters like a guilty schoolboy. Up among the field-guns now, with their sharp, fierce cracking, and here, for the first time on this pilgrimage, the padre heard the shrill ascending whine of an approaching shell. He edged quickly into the road-bank, and four earth-shaking reports, and great volcanoes of mud and smoke threatened him. He cowered close as the whirr of splinters passed him by. He paused by the bank. What ought he to do? Why couldn't he be given his orders like everyone else, and be saved all this? Reasonable orders anyway that could be obeyed? It was having to decide all the time for oneself that was the trouble. What would become of Mary and the kids? Perhaps she might start a tea-room. Ugh! How could she bring up the kids. Well, other plucky women like his wife did it. Strange he never seemed to realise all this before. How easy it must be for a single man, he thought. Yet he could not help coming. The shock and first surprise of deadly peril passed, and then the mind steadied itself. Recollection came of his purpose. This thing must be settled once and for all. "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." So that was what it meant to



nerves more sensitive than his, and that ending was a certainty. And so he pushed up the dark valley, seeing now the flares that marked the line. More shells, this time met by flinging himself into a crater. Awful when one's coldest reason tells one, without possibility of denial or assurance, that the next moment may be the end. All right for him, but how about the others at home? Up again, and on. Hard to see one's feet in the dark, and the ground is very broken. "Light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." The words and the familiar chant sang themselves over and over in his brain. That was the object of it all. But what could he do when he got up? Anyway, show them he was there. Might mean something. So on, while other shells seemed to tear a trajectory across his nerves. "Hullo padre," said the second in command, "what are you doing here? Thought the brig. told you to stay back this time. They've been growling at the number of officers' pensions they've got to pay, I suppose, and they're economising us. I've got to be good." They went down the dug-out, and the others smilingly listened to the padre's airy request for a look round.

"I'll take him, sir," said the adjutant. "I want to see how 'C' are getting on with that wiring. Come on, padre, and don't talk, and don't swear out loud if you fall over anything."

Pozieres ridge in early September cannot be described. The two rapidly traversed the communication sap (worst spot of the lot, as the adjutant explained), and soon the padre knew that they were in the line. He could see white faces looking up at him from the ledges, and found a sort of comfort from the reflection that his celluloid collar was visible, and would serve as his introduction. He progressed slowly with hoarse whispers of "Good-night"—such a futile thing to say under the circumstances—but what else was there to say to these quiet figures

in the ledges? Once, as they made room for him in an outburst of five-nines, he realised what they had to stand all night. "Light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." Yes, that did make all the other things trivial. Perhaps his being there might—anyway, he knew it was where he ought to be.

"Crawl this bit, padre," came from the adjutant, "there's a sniper, and the trench has been blown in."

The padre felt something of that old sensation he knew at school, starting in the "100," straining for the crack of a pistol, but it did not come. So to the doctor who reported "nothing doing for the last hour," and back to headquarters again.

"By Jove, I was scared," something impelled him to admit. "But I suppose I'll soon get over it."

"That's all right, padre," said the O.C. "You'll be all right, but you won't get over it. You'll get worse if anything, especially if you've got any imagination. But you will get through somehow. When you see these beggars carrying on," he nodded at a runner coming down the steps, "you keep going and do what's necessary."

And as the padre staggered home across the craters there was peace in his heart, for the greatest fear was conquered. His message had won over the thought of home laid waste, and the turmoil of nerves. The job had conquered the man. The fight would have to be fought every time, but it could be won again. The organ notes were a trumpet call. "Light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

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### MY FIRST STRAFE.

I was waiting at the little cemetery at the head of Sausage Valley, and directly behind me were a battery of 60-pounders. Standing in front of 60-



pounder batteries when these were firing American ammunition before the Republic really began to take a personal interest, was not healthy. The second "premature" tore past me with an ugly roar, and I decided I would go back and talk to the officer in charge of the firing. In a trench near by a telephonist was receiving messages from the forward observing officer, two miles away in the front line, and occasionally the officer in charge of the shooting would call a correction. "Barraging a road," he said their present job was. I consoled with him about his ammunition, but respect for my office choked his utterance. A brigade headquarters (infantry) situated higher up had asked him not to do it again. It is rough on an artillery sub. to expect him to return a civil answer, under these provocations; on the other hand, it is rough on a brigadier's nerves to be raked by his own supporting artillery, but the barrage had to go on. So the sub. wore a worried look.

It was a quiet afternoon for Sausage Valley, and even in this battery the men were, many of them, free to carry on the calm pursuit of their domestic enemies, sitting half-clad in the warm sun. Reports of various volumes rang out on all sides of us, but we took no more notice of them than the men in a workshop would take of the noise of hammers, for were they not our own guns? Suddenly, as we talked, a cloud of black dust seemed to blot out our vision and sting our faces, and a splitting report slammed into us. I'd had the same experience once before through witlessly wandering near the muzzle of a camouflaged gun, so as I found my voice I asked the eternal question, "Ours or theirs?"

"Oh, theirs!" came the answer, as my companion leapt into the pit. I followed him, but just as I jumped I saw out of the corner of my eye another black cloud spring out of the ground in front of me, a high scream and a rending crash following in

a swift unbroken series of impressions. Another second and a human yell of "Fire! Fire! Ammunition afire!"

Now, it was not revealed to me then that cordite burns; being in my third day I thought it exploded, so I thought for the moment that I had come to an impressive conclusion, but in the hypothetical remainder of my career I put another gun-pit between me and the source of the trouble. Then came an officer down the line of broken German trench which connected the pits and he shouted for buckets. A moment later another officer entered my gun-pit, picked up the telephone and asked for "Group." Outside it sounded as if the heavens were being torn in strips, and thudding crashes shook the ground. Easy to imagine them a few yards nearer, and what a ghastly end they would make of one. Almost impossible to imagine it was possible to escape. When connected, the captain reported he was being heavily shelled, and asked permission to cease fire and withdraw his men. It must have been granted, for a few moments later I was conscious of groups of men sprinting all they knew for the next line of trenches, about 100 yards away. Weird they looked in the leisurely undress of two minutes before. I put my head out, spent untold hours clambering out of the trench, and fixing my eyes on an objective ran as hard as I could. I remember every obstacle.

It was a rotten bit of trench already smashed by our own guns, and, as soon as I got there, I began scrambling along it in search of the "better 'ole." I got into a little recess with several gunners, and we waited quietly what might befall, while the heavens shrieked and the earth seemed to threaten us in a different spot each shifting minute, with suddenly uprising black eruptions. No one spoke, everyone's face seemed immobile; in all soberness we knew the danger could not be greater. One man's knees were trembling, and I remember wondering why mine



were not. I decided it was because I had not been out since Mons. Of course, everyone made a point of not noticing. So we remained wrapped, each man in the solitudes of his own soul, till at last the earth and sky became still. Then one by one we scrambled out, in a surprised way, into the open again. A young major, with the ribbon of the D.S.O., uncoiled his great length, closed his eyes, stretched and shivered. Opening them he noticed me and, catching my eye, laughed, "Don't like it, padre, don't like it a little bit; and it's worse every time. I'm not ashamed to admit that I pray like blazes on these occasions."

Now, it's hardly fair to preach to a man when he exposes his flank to you like that, but I could not resist the obvious riposte, "What about between times, major?"

"Ah, well, padre," he said, as if excusing himself, "you see, I have a wife at home who is rather keen on these things, and when they do this sort of thing for you, you feel you must do something yourself, sort of self-defence, what?" "Wonder why we are so keen on making ourselves out such damned heathens?" he added meditatively. "You'd better stop to tea now, padre," he added. "Come and see the wounded, but first I think we'd better have a drink."

"Thanks, major," I said, "I do feel like it."

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### MY FIRST BURIAL.

One is not allowed to keep a diary—and one has not time. But in this strange, wild world, which seethes with life and death—this world twenty miles wide and five hundred miles long, which is absolutely

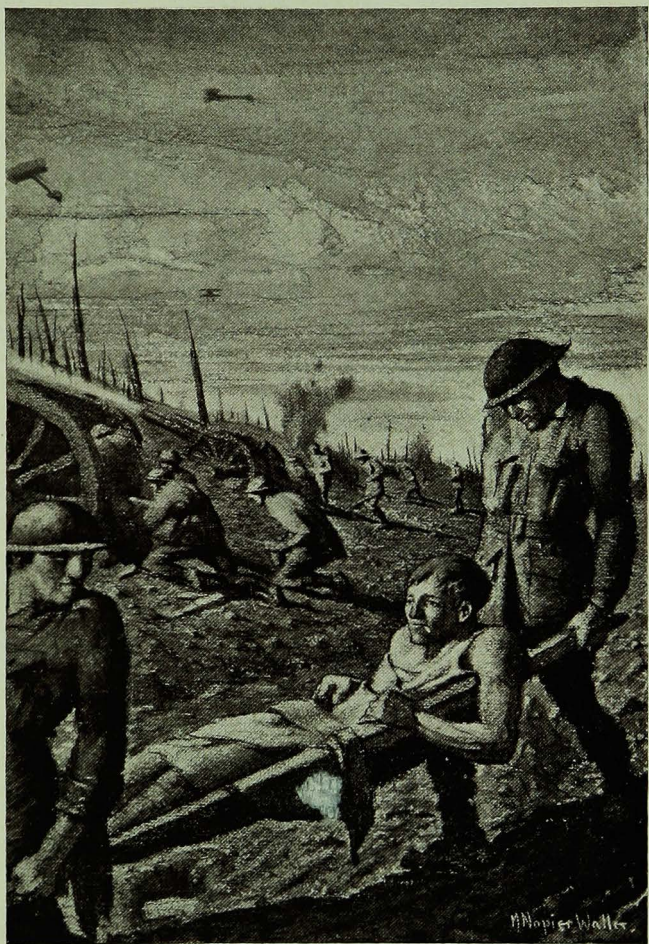
cut off from all outside human existence and experience—the mind moves in ways of its own. One lives from moment to moment. The afternoon may be three hours of hell and mud and the imminence of violent death; the evening a better dinner than usual, a cigarette, and a magazine. Memory and anticipation are dispensed with. Yet when wounds, sickness or leave come, the memory eagerly traverses the crowded months and dwells upon, strives and tries to restore to us hours which have taught us the terrible and intimate lessons of war.

For myself it is not so much the picturesque or dramatic, or even the acutely unpleasant, memories which stand out from the crowded and varied chaos of experiences as those in which I find afterwards I have discovered some new truth or the full meaning of something I knew before. That is the greatest shock to the soul—when some truth which we have known and used, suddenly flashes into a new revelation.

“The things that have stuck” in my case are fairly commonplace. They came in the ordinary round of duty, and at the time I experienced no extraordinary emotion that I can recall. But they have become symbols to me. They were moments and happenings when I seemed to catch a glimpse of the mind of God.

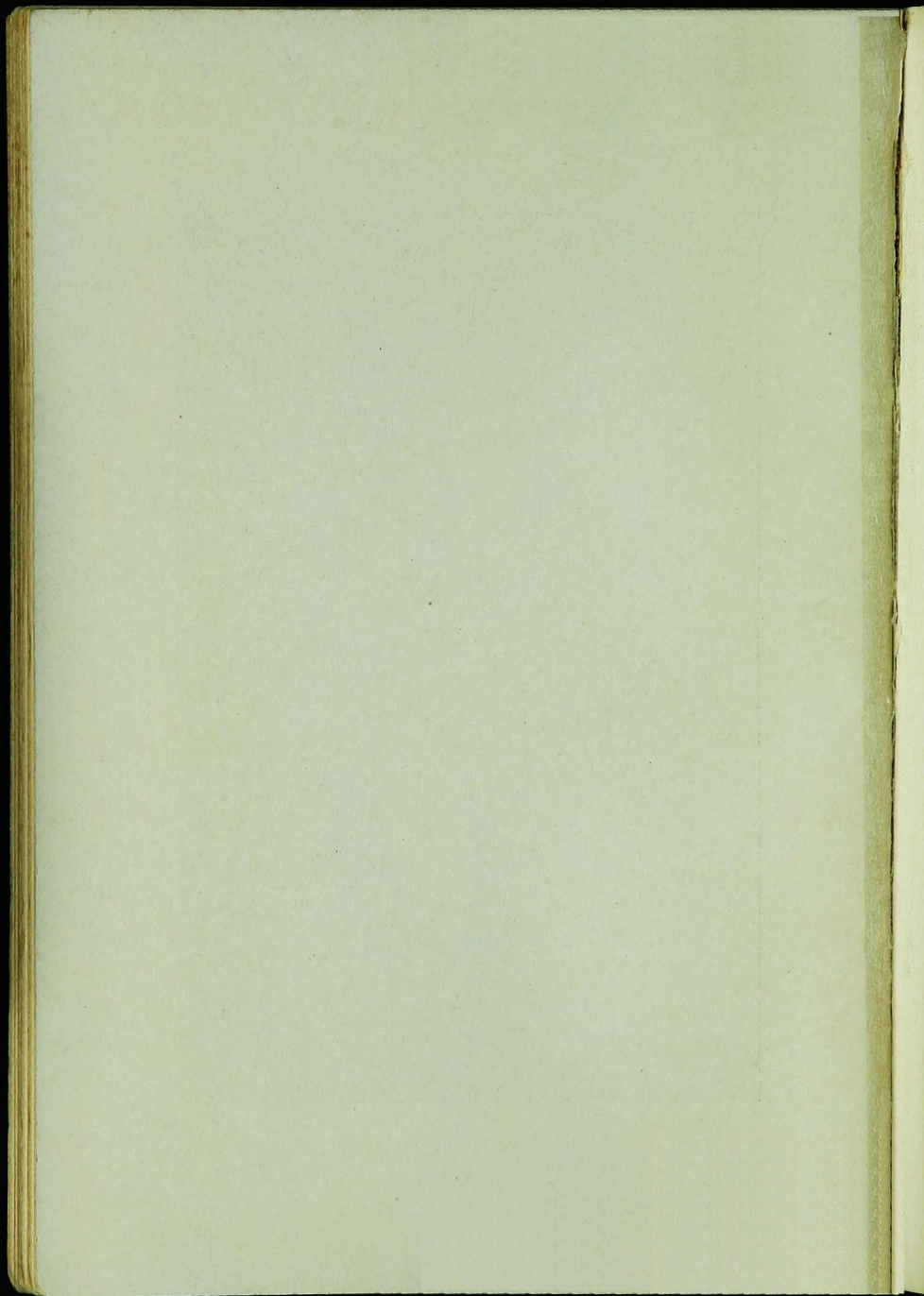
I remember being awakened one morning in my dug-out at “Casualty Corner” by a stretcher-bearer, with a request from the medical officer commanding the section of a field ambulance which had an aid-post next to ours, asking me to go up and bury one of his stretcher-bearers. I wrote my reply on the foot of the despatch, with the time I would be there; the bearer saluted, and withdrew. I rolled carefully out of the blankets, not wanting more mud than need be next to my skin. I climbed into some clothes, put on my gum boots and leather waistcoat, and walked up a few steps on to the road, tipped carefully my allow-





“THEY STILL CARRY ON.”

[See Page 20.]





ance of water from the common kerosene tin into a canvas bucket, washed and shaved in cold water, propping up a bit of cracked glass against the top of the dug-out. There was fairly constant traffic in the very heavy mud. Men were going up in numerous small single-file processions, heavily laden with duckboards, rations, and water. Some of them envied me my safety razor, no doubt—most envied me the chance of shaving at all. It was a glorious morning. Far up in the blue, like tiny, beautiful little silver birds, the aeroplanes floated, and tiny flashes of flame, stabbing the blue, danced round them. The momentary flash would be followed immediately by a fleecy ball of smoke. The scene, æsthetically, was beautiful. Youth, in its beauty of daring and sacrifice, scaling the heights of this glorious morning, was defying those flashes of death hurled into God's heaven. The work of the aeroplanes is as methodical, definite, and matter-of-fact as any of the other organised energies of war. But somehow the idea of knight-errantry is inseparably associated with it.

In those days a lovely morning meant a terribly busy day. The field guns on the bank above woke up and began to fire with sharp, ear-splitting reports. (They had only arrived the day before, and we "old inhabitants" had rather resented the intrusion.) I had a rather hurried breakfast of tea and very thick bacon, put on my tin hat, and went along to my sad duty.

I found everything ready. The medical officer gave the necessary orders. The little cemetery was on the right of the road, just before you go down to the chalk pits. The 1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions know the spot. Behind us cracked the field batteries, and the heavier guns in "Sausage Valley" were awakening, in measured thunder, to the day's work. I pulled out of my pocket a long surplice of very fine material made to roll up small, and a simple cloth stole, and, the comrades of the fallen man standing

round, I began the service. They had only been relieved the night before, and had almost certainly not slept for several days. We all kept on our steel hats. The Hun was at his usual game of barraging the chalk pits, two-minute intervals, and we might have the bad luck to get some splinters. "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord; whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, though he die yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And around us rolled the vast chorus of death. Was it merely irony, or was it the battle-cry of the human spirit in love and sacrifice proclaiming its eternal victory over circumstance, and death by the voice of the Son of Man?

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live" (whe-e-ee-w! Crash!—one in the valley. Enemy registering on a battery over near Contalmaison commanded by a schoolmate of mine), "and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower"—I look at the little cross, the boy's age is 20. The service draws quickly to its close. The enemy batteries are now shelling the opposite slope, and our gunners there have evidently got permission to cease fire and get under cover.

But I had been told that this boy was beloved by his comrades. He had fallen most gallantly while carrying across a bit of open ground, behind the front line, to the Albert road.

They expected me to say something, I thought. There was only one thing to be said—the truth that writes itself across so many of the finest young lives—"Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." And I put it to them that, though we believe we are all carrying out God's command, and vindicating His law and will against those who would sweep them away, and carry violence and oppression against those who cannot help themselves, yet in the nature of their work the stretcher-bearers are doing that which, may be, is near-



est to God's heart, that which is Christ's own. To others it is given to be instruments of God's anger and His justice—to them, servants of His love. Now ours to share the victorious pain whereby Christ is redeeming the world. "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden."

And behind us, from "Sausage Valley," arose the thunder of God's anger; but upon the little cemetery was the "peace of God which passeth all understanding"—the peace that comes to men who have given their lives that they may win them, to living men who have conquered the fear of death.

The service ends.

"Fall in! C section!" The speaker is a heavy-eyed, unshaven sergeant, in a blue sweater. The barrage is falling on the road up to the trenches, but the trumpets of God are calling His servants to duty and beyond.

## CHAPTER II.

### A Padre's Job

My senior chaplain and I had spent a trying day together while he initiated me into my work. At the close of it all the dispositions of my brigade were fairly clear. The line, battalion headquarters, aid and collecting posts for wounded, coffee stalls for walking wounded, brigade headquarters, reserves, supports, transport, and my varied duties in reference to each were outlined in my mind. The Boche had been "searching" Sausage Valley with 5.9's, and once or twice my senior had taken his pipe out of his mouth to point to a cloud of black smoke, and occasionally halted me by an embankment or gunpit as we heard them pass over. Once he had, with a gesture, directed my attention to a shell-burst in a battery. Some of the men built up the sandbags and removed a wounded man, and others of the section went on serving the gun. "See—they carry on," he said; and, turning back towards the few gaunt trees and the black exploding clouds which marked the ridge of Pozieres, and the road punctuated by shell-bursts, up and down which bearers, runners, and ration-carriers had plied all day, he summed it all up with a sweep of his pipe, "Every man doing his job."

As evening drew in and we came to rest on his blankets in his headquarters' trench, humbled by the task of trying to help such men, I asked for all the advice he could give me. "My boy," he replied, "I



can give you no advice. Every man must work out his own salvation. Think out where you'll be most useful, and go there."

The spiritual problems and difficulties of our work are far too complex for this article. I would indicate the nature of the most crucial by stating that the battlefield does not give to ninety-nine men out of every hundred any immediate apprehension of the Divine. Very much the reverse is the truth. And the task which rests on us, is to keep clear spiritual issues, and make men realise that every set-back, sin, or agony in this life is a challenge, and has a possible spiritual victory. Corresponding to it so we would interpret Christ's message, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I want to make as clear as I can some of the ordinary details which are included in the padre's daily work. I can do this best by simply talking about my own efforts for, as far as I could make out, they were fairly typical. For a fortnight during one time at Pozieres I was stationed in a dressing-station at Casualty Corner, where I could see all my brigade wounded. It was a lively spot. The dressing-station was situated in the mouth of a dug-out cut out from the side of the sunken road. The roof was fairly solidly timbered, and the few feet of earth it supported above constituted an adequate protection against shrapnel. From the bank overhead came the incessant crackle of field-guns, and from the valley behind us the very air throbbed as the heavy batteries fired their regular never-ending salvoes. We were at the mouth of the valley just where the road swung towards Pozieres. The traffic was great. Up the road trudged weary, mud-encrusted men, bearing duck-boards for the flooring of the trenches, ammunition, water, rations; and reliefs of infantry in platoons passed by in single file, the officer leading and distinguished from his men only in that he carried a stick instead of a slung rifle.

Down came the "runners," with their red armlets, who keep up a service all day from the line to battalion headquarters, and thence back to brigade. Telephone wires could not be relied on during that bombardment, and the use of wireless was not then what it is now. Still, a zone call from an aeroplane to artillery, giving our corner's address, would have obliterated us. But the reason for my being there was that the stretcher-bearers carried their burdens to this corner, and there they were laid down and examined, and waited for the horse ambulances to take them back to the divisional collecting posts. We were periodically bombarded, but had fairly good cover. The brown, mud-caked bearers, in leather waistcoats and thigh boots; the prone, silent figure, on the stretcher, muddy as only an infantryman can be in the mud of the Somme, his white bandages the one clean thing about him—all these details make a picture which one can never forget. The stretcher is laid on trestles. The interior of the dug-out is lit by a fire contained in a brazier in the corner, and several candles are stuck round the walls. Several stretcher-bearers sit round against the walls, in the listlessness of utter weariness, waiting their turn to go up to the line again.

The doctor flashes his torch on the recumbent figure, reads the card (red-edged if the patient is dangerously hit or needs very urgent treatment) tied to the man's buttonhole, and swiftly examines the dressings. Usually these are not disturbed till the man gets farther back. Then, the doctor having done what he can, it is my turn. The man is laid on the floor, may be in a row of other stretchers, to await removal. I slip my arm under his head, and give him a drink of coffee; take down his particulars and home address, and any message he may like to send. It will be my business to give those at home this brief glimpse and word from their beloved. All wounded men suffer at this stage from shock. I must



do all I can to help to inner tranquillity and fortitude, so I proceed as quietly as possible about my Father's business.

I cannot well go into that here. A man shaken by the shock and pain of his wounds needs strength of will and peace of mind above all. He knows not how severe his injuries are. Wide-eyed he faces eternity and gropes in the loneliness of pain and shock for sympathy and confidence. He is not to be questioned or worried, but to be reassured in his great loneliness and darkness that the eternal arms of God's love and mercy are about him, and helped to feel the grip of Christ's pierced hands—the Christ who has been through it all Himself.

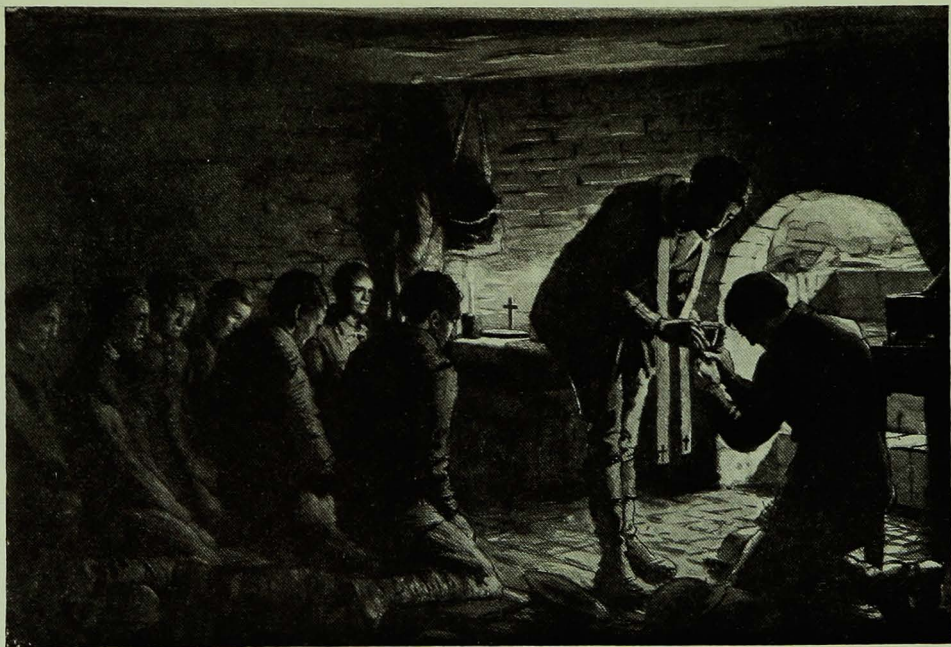
What is possible varies with each man. With some I slip out of my pocket a white stole, and those near by may catch the words of absolution from the "Visitation of the Sick." One, after a moment or two places a cigarette between the man's lips, a word of encouragement, and he is lifted into the ambulance and goes back, through collecting post and casualty clearing station, to the base hospital and Blighty.

At the coffee-stalls we had rows and rows of converted jam tins as mugs, arranged along a shelf cut out of the roadside. Under the shelter of a water-proof sheet there is a huge boiler always boiling. The man in charge of it constantly tips into it whole tins of coffee and milk, and stirs vigorously with a short pole. The Australian Comforts Fund delivers the raw material. Imagine the scene. Rain is falling in a steady drizzle. The road, cut to pieces by the constant traffic of ambulances and brigade transport, is 18 inches deep in mud, and the fatigue parties and walking wounded are very weary. The doctor gives point to my assistants' labours amid the falling rain by telling them that they are probably preventing many cases of pneumonia. I remember once during that fortnight seeing a group of German prisoners, very dirty, tired, and bandaged, being

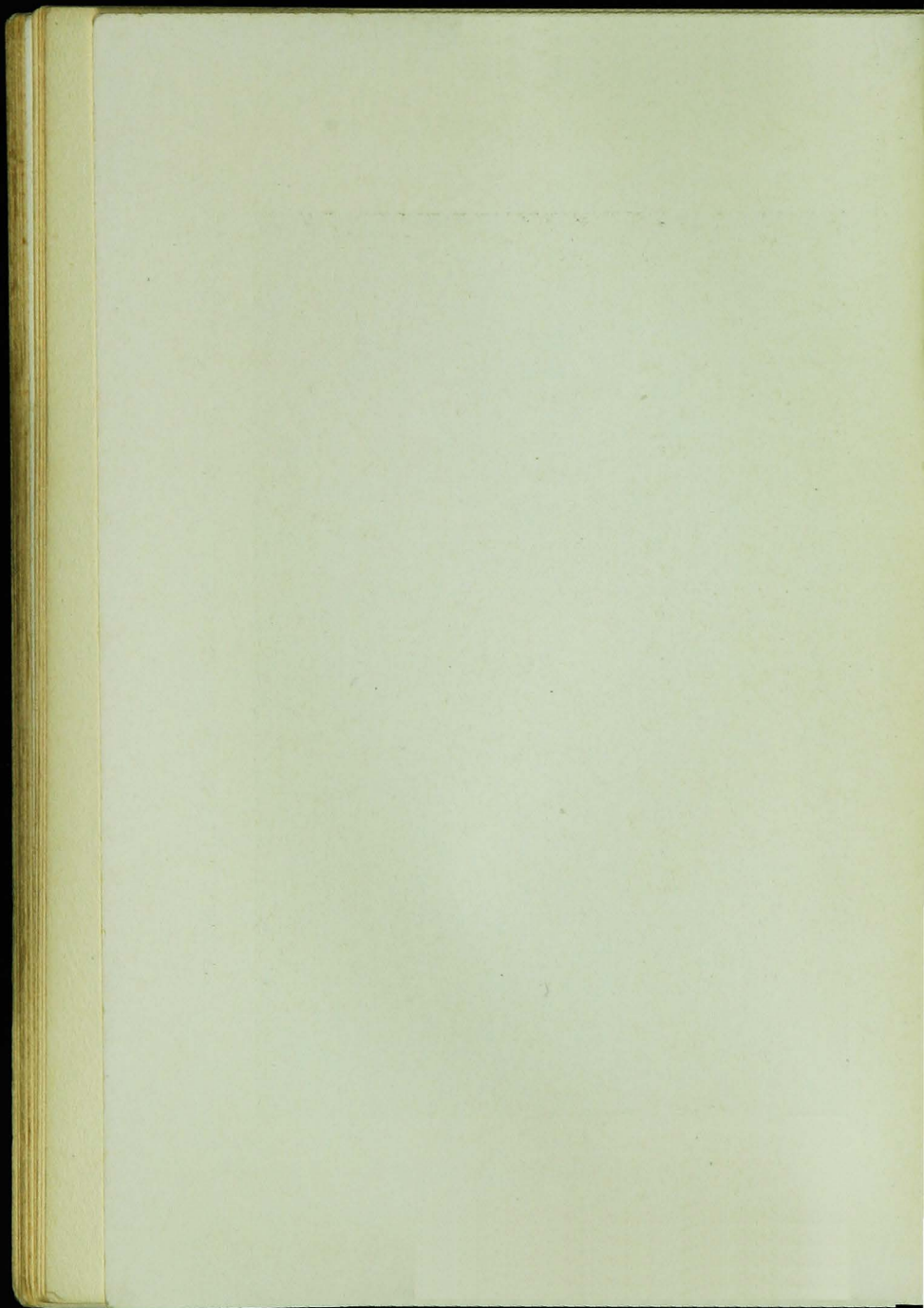
escorted down from the line by a slightly wounded Australian, armed only with a bayonet. Fritz hadn't the slightest desire to escape, and the escort strolled casually 50 yards in front, his bayonet dangling in his hand. I called out to him, "Bring the poor blighters in and give them a drink." "All right, sir," he replied wearily, "but that'll be their fourth cup of corfee, and they've 'ad a go of rum a'ready." They had passed the cookers which one battalion C.O. had pushed right up behind the line, and it was my business to see that they were working at full pressure and had all the material they wanted. Five months afterwards I was living in a dug-out in Delville Wood, at the lower end of the Flers road. I nailed up a notice on the road stating where I was, and intimating that Holy Communion would be celebrated in my dug-out every morning at 6.

Several mornings a week young gunners or stretcher-bearers would find their way across the wilderness of mud and receive the sacrament. These scattered units, especially the R.G.A., who were only temporarily attached to us, were never able to hold services, because of course a wireless message from an aeroplane could concentrate on a group of men in the open very heavy masses of artillery in a few seconds. So, with a kerosene case as an altar, and a solitary candle, we celebrated the sacred mystery, penetrating that shattered world of desolation and the shadow of death with His presence, who had "poured out His soul unto death" that we might have life. So with hearts uplifted those weary boys went back to their batteries. The experience they have shared is closely connected with the bearing of the heavy daily burden. One's eyes are apt to become a little glazed, and a hardened crust seems to form over the human spirit, when thought and feeling are all pain. "Nature's anæsthetic," Donald Hankey calls it, this hyssop which deadens the suffering by which the world is being redeemed.





SACRAMENT IN THE CELLAR OF LONGUEVAL CHATEAU. [*See Page 25.*]





That winter (1916-17) is full of memories of services held in weird places. The bottom of my dug-out in Delville Wood would hold 40 men, and sometimes it was full. Candles were very precious. I would take the service by the light of one, and they would sing familiar hymns in the pitch darkness, led by a sergeant of the 4th Field Ambulance with a fine voice, and the D.C.M. He shared the candle. Barns were our favourite places for holding voluntary services when we could get them. I remember one of my Christmas Day celebrations was held in a stable filled with clean straw, at the village of Ridemont, near Dernancourt. I have also held a Communion service in the cellars of Longueval Chateau for the gunner officers of the R.G.A., when the buzzer had to be on the table at the C.O.'s elbow, so that the officers might spring to their posts in the event of an emergency call.

The mental picture which most people at home have of the padre chatting affably with groups of men in nice, deep, clean trenches is seldom realised. The "line," both British and German, in these days, consists of "strong points" (machine-gun positions) and listening posts linked into a system, and manned mainly by sentries. Moving about in the day time and breezy conversations are practices at no time encouraged.

The heart of a chaplain's job is his personal dealings with the men. He cannot hope to know everybody in his unit, of course; but he can put himself on such an easy, personal footing with them that they all know him, and that for any man desiring his closer fellowship there is the minimum of ice to be broken. His rank will not interfere after the first two or three weeks. The men perfectly understand his position.

By the way, the practice so common in Australia of giving chaplains their military titles is unknown in England and France. "C.F." covers everything

up to the deputy chaplain-general, who is a member of the commander-in-chief's staff.

These personal dealings are very wonderfully varied. I have prayed with men in the Egyptian desert by moonlight, and argued theology with an imperturbable church-warden stretcher-bearer by the light of Fritz's star shells. I have tried to make peace by correspondence between husband and wife. I have had to explain, while hurrying to the train, the marriage laws of England and France, together with the workings of the law anent court-martials and stoppages of pay to a sanguine, prospective bridegroom. He had proposed on a basis of mental arithmetic, and found that an estimated bank balance of £60 was in reality 6s. I have helped a broken-hearted youngster from the "clink" to find his feet again. I have gained an insight into every occupation in the Commonwealth, and broken bread with all sorts and conditions of men. It is in these personal dealings far more than in parade services that a padre will find his vital work. It is difficult to get a devotional atmosphere in a parade service. The parade will probably be used for other, very secular, purposes. There are countless distractions in the open air. Aeroplanes buzz overhead, and traffic limbers along the road. Half the men would, to say truth, sooner be playing cards in their billets. Nevertheless, a chaplain who takes the infinite pains necessary to reduce what he has to say to utter simplicity to absolutely avoid all conventional phrasing, and to put a cutting edge on his utterances, will find that he is listened to with a keener interest and anticipation than has ever befallen him in his church at home. Our fellows are interested in sermons, and will often wait weeks for a chance to discuss or argue points with the preacher. The men do not mind being "roared up" as long as it is done in a straightforward sort of way.



## CHAPTER III.

### The Usual Artillery Activity

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#### A PERSONAL IMPRESSION.

"There was the usual artillery activity on our front."—Communique.

There is nothing dramatic or exciting in this story. It is just a literally accurate record of the feelings and experiences of an ordinary individual on an ordinary day. I paused on the light-railway embankment, where I had climbed to be out of the mud, and gazed round the waste of tree stumps, shattered trenches, broken dug-outs, and shell holes which constituted Delville Wood in November of the year of grace 1916. I picked up my bearings by a certain arrangement of smashed stumps and made my way to my dug-out. It was a very palace among dug-outs. Three entrances and five rooms, and thirty feet deep—needless to say, built by brother Boche. The chaplain who had preceded me in this part of the world had discovered it, smashed and full of German dead, and had put one of our A.M.C. units on to it, bargaining that one room should be reserved in perpetuity for a chaplain. So I inherited it from him. It was pitch dark, of course, rather draughty, and unfurnished; but one could sleep almost out of sound of the guns. The sharp reports were dulled to a low rumble, and slumber was untroubled. One

was practically safe from all but the heaviest "stuff." Truly a palace among dug-outs.

I struggled wearily out of my thigh-boots, which were mud nearly to the top. I had been spending an exceedingly unpleasant Sunday afternoon visiting a battalion of my brigade in the support trenches, which ran over a hill in view of the Boche. I had spent a considerable part of the time lying with exceeding flatness in the very muddy bottom of the aforesaid trenches, and twice had been splashed with Fritz's shells. They had shelled these trenches in the morning, and, as Fritz is methodical and regular in his habits, I had thought the afternoon a favourable time for a pastoral visit. These trenches, however, owing to their position (we could see across to Bapaume, and Bapaume could see us), were shelled fairly constantly, more so just then than the front line. My visit, therefore, had not been an unqualified success. I had barely battled through the deep mud into the trench when the familiar distant hum grew to a roar, and ended in the shrill scream of the shell that lands close. The men had rigged rough rain shelters of waterproof sheets across the trench, and I had to climb up on the top to make my way along until I found a place where the battered bank was steep enough to afford reasonable shelter, and there I lay, listening to the approaching roar of each shell, ending in a shrill crescendo, a metallic crash as it hit the earth, and the whizz of splinters as they flew overhead. There is always some seconds' uncertainty as to whether the shell is for you or not.

There is no such thing as fearlessness under shell fire. I believe courage is the conquest of fear. Lack of imagination helps, but the men who win distinction are the men with keen, alert minds, highly strung nerves, who can carry through an able and difficult operation in the face of supreme difficulties. Such men do not belong to the "fearless" type. They



are men who suffer when they have time to think, and in suffering achieve self-mastery. All men experience an instinctive shrinking from death and wounds, especially when they are in health, and have time to think. As I came out of the trench I counted a procession of ten stretchers. It was therefore a very unpleasant afternoon, and I had been shot over again on the way home. It was safe enough this time, and I noticed with a sigh of relief that they were now firing over my head to Longueval Circus, where Fritz was dropping them at regular intervals, in the hope of hitting water waggons, ration carts, or ammunition limbers on their way up. It is strange how automatically selfish the instinct of self-preservation makes one. One's "moral self" asserts itself, of course, and you sympathise with the ration carts, but one's first "natural" instinct is of thankfulness that they are shooting somewhere else.

I was very tired with the heavy mud, and jolly thankful to get home. Well, I had got off one boot, and then I remembered I had borrowed B——'s electric torch, and promised to let him have it by nightfall at latest. He would want it, too. He lived on the other side of Delville Wood, and was trying to run a little canteen and coffee-stall near a small dressing-station. Alas, he only could open about three times a week, when he could get a limber full of supplies, and then he sold them out in half an hour; but the attempt was worth while, and he hoped for better days. I climbed into the boot again, and crawled up the slippery steps with the torch. I paused on the top, and gazed round the sky line. It was dark now, and the gaunt black stumps were scarcely visible. The sky line blazed with lights, mostly white Verey lights, which marked out the course of the closely locked front lines. Every moment or two a flash would light up the darkness for a second as a heavy gun fired. The field guns were firing, but individually and at regular intervals, not as for a

"stunt." The heavy batteries in the immediate neighbourhood were silent. On my right sounded the familiar scream of Fritz's going over, as I judged, to the trenches I had left.

It was a fairly quiet evening. I steered by a gunner's brazier—that is, I went for about 20 paces at right angles to it, struck a bridge of mud across an old historic trench, turned sharp right, and found the road. I had barely stepped into the stream, and was looking to my footing, when an immense report at the side of my head stunned, blinded, deafened, and dazed me. An 8-in. howitzer had been left out of my calculations. My comment was suitable, if worldly. But a pleasant voice out of the darkness called out, "Hullo, is that you, padre?" "Yes," I said; "wish you'd keep your beastly gun to yourself when a gentleman walks in front of it." "Sorry," he said, "can't see you. Come to dinner to-night." I thanked him exceedingly. An 8 in. howitzer battery has its own officers' car, and does itself rather well. "See you later, then," he concluded; and, as an afterthought, "Mind the curve; they're firing salvoes." I left the side of the road, and paddled out into midstream. Just then half a dozen batteries commenced their firing. A battery firing salvoes fires its guns in rapid succession, probably with minute differences in sighting. The air became a succession of roars and bursts of flame. Nothing to worry about, though, and I held on my path undisturbed up the road, to Longueval. Howitzers are tolerable. They roar. But 6 in. guns are intolerable. They have an immense flash, and a sharp double report, which seems to get you squarely between the eyes. Field guns have a sharp crack, which takes getting used to.

I plugged up the road when I heard the familiar rustle over my head and the crash in front. Longueval Circus again. Confound it. I gazed wistfully over the wood, but I knew what the darkness con-



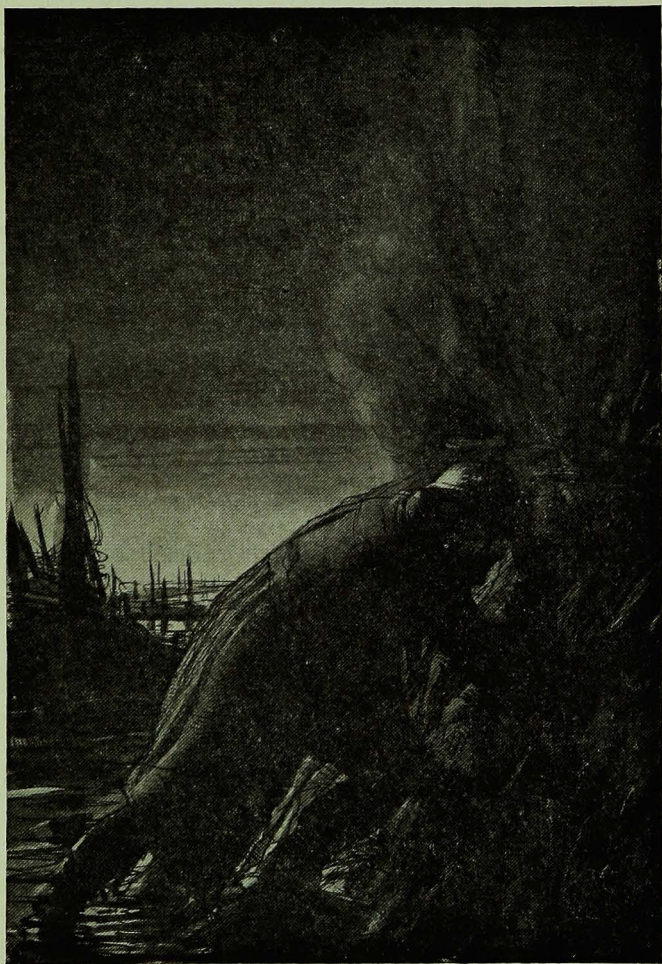
tained. Shellholes were the only surface, trenches and buried dug-outs, twisted steel stakes, and barbed wire had to be reckoned with. No chance of a short cut. So I plugged along, the bursts coming nearer, till I estimated that I was on the edge of the fire area. Thank God for Fritz's accuracy! I stood under a bank, and asked an artilleryman coming down the road what intervals he reckoned they were. About every two minutes he reckoned, so I waited for the next and broke for it. You can do wonders even in two feet of mud in two minutes, but I found some broken rails on the embankment, and walked delicately. One burst within about thirty yards. I dived down on to the road to dodge splinters, and knew for the time I was all right. Rapidly I made my way along the top road to my friend's dug-out. He was rigging a counter for the morning. He had "acquired" a piece of timber (originally, I fear, the property of the Royal Engineers) and half a limber of supplies. He regarded my honesty in the matter of the electric torch much as the French military critic regarded the Charge of the Light Brigade, "C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la guerre." This padre from Tasmania has since earned a well-merited M.C.

I pocketed a tin of sausages, and hurried back to a wonderful meal with my gunner friends. A gramophone croaked cheerily on a side table. Their guns, in charge of a couple of officers who were relieved half-way through dinner, roared outside, and the buzzer buzzed at the C.O.'s side. With an unlighted cigarette he indicated a little thread of red on the map that stood for the strip of trenches he was blowing out of existence. The forward observing officer reported "excellent practice." "Bodies seen hurtling through the air," and the envious field gunner, through whose headquarters the message came, thought fit to buzz the additional information "Groans almost audible," and, though both reports were

cheerily disbelieved, it was an excellent dinner. Their roof was not capable of more than a 4.2, so, with an invitation to them to spend the night if things got bad I departed to my Stygian cave.

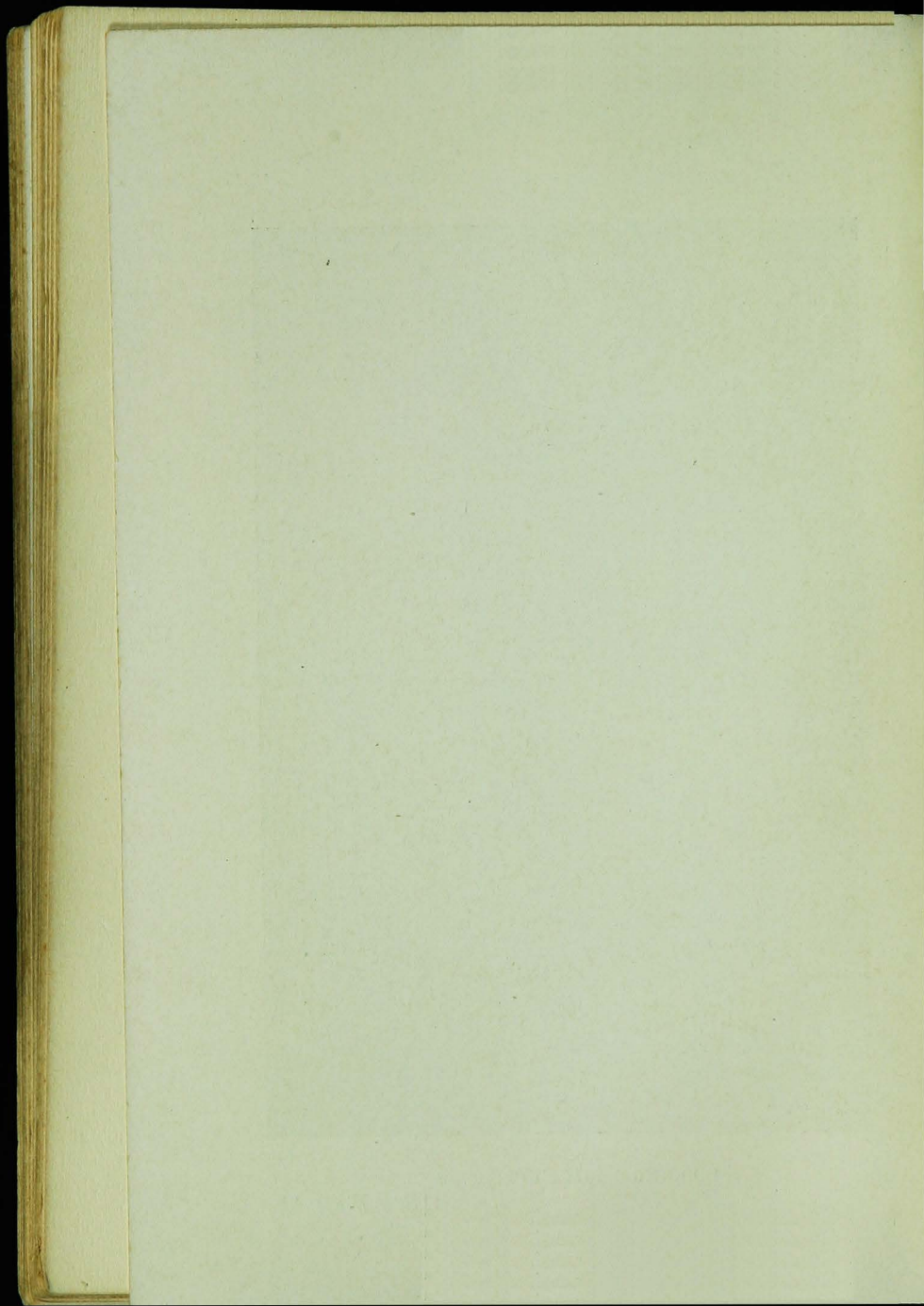
The moral of this plain unvarnished tale is that you should not lay aside your paper impatiently, and assume that there is nothing to interest you when you read an uneventful communique; let your imagination work, and try to enter into the human unofficial side of the fact that "there was the usual artillery activity on our front."





DODGING HIGH EXPLOSIVES.

[*See Page 31.*]





## CHAPTER IV.

### Somme Sketches

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#### BUSH TYPES.

It is wonderful how, in spite of the real inner change wrought in a man by military life, bush types persist. Just note the man driving that G.S. waggon. He is going up to an advanced dump with rations. Brown mud and watery desolation surround him. No environment could be more unlike his own hot, dusty roads, bordered by eucalyptus. Yet does not that hunched back, that pipe standing out clear against the sky line, that rather bored, fixed expression on the immobile face, speak of long solitary journeyings in the bush. Should a shell intrude on his meditations, he will indicate the fact that he has noticed it by spitting on that side when next, in the fulness of time, he has occasion to spit. Should several arrive, and his mature judgment tell him they are meant for his piece of road, he will stir his heavy-laden horses to a faster walk. But no observable change of expression will cross his face. Should he be splashed, he will content himself with one terse verbal comment on his enemy's pedigree. How many keen, highly strung minds in positions of leadership and responsibility would give all that they had for that driver's nerves; his heritage from the bush?

\* \* \*

There are obviously two Australian privates coming down from "the line." But I had to rub my eyes, to clear them of the impression of two bushmen humping their swags.

There was no N.C.O. The strain of several days' intense discipline had slackened for a moment; they had been left behind for some purpose or other, and were "drifting" back to their battalion. So they moved abreast instead of in single file. The "tin hat" instead of being worn flat, was tilted slightly backwards, both hands in the pockets, shoulders stooped, a swag up, which included tin utensils, knife and fork, rolled blanket, and they swung along with a rolling unmilitary stride, legs wide apart. O, Gippsland, when the mud of Picardy is washed away, thy children shall return to thee unchanged!

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### HOME FIRES.

Somewhere behind the Push. It is rather late and getting dark, and I am looking for my last Light Horse patrol before riding home. I am riding in half-frozen mud, trying to discover the little group of shelters among many others, belonging to men of kindred nations. I make for the fires of "cookers," and enquire, always in vain. But finally, when I headed for a new light, a voice meets me out of the darkness, "Would you care for a cup of tea, sir." Soul of my country! On that bare hillside in Picardy, that voice sounds clear and strong; but it comes to me from a long distance away.

It is not the end of the journey; but I have found the comfortable fires of those I was seeking in the dark.



## CHAPTER V.

### Close Quarters

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#### THE CROSSING.

It was with much hesitation that I included this sketch. But it was represented to me that some insight into the facts might bring comfort to many whose dear ones had gone in this way.

The scene is laid in a dug-out used as an aid-post. It is lit by several candles stuck in jam tins, placed in ledges round the walls. Several stretcher-bearers are seated on the floor, leaning against the walls. Their bent heads and relaxed attitudes speak of utter weariness. The sound of heavy footsteps squelching through the mud grows more distinct. The bearers enter bringing a wounded man, who is lying relaxed on the stretcher. His eyes are closed, but he opens them as he is lifted to be laid on the table.

The doctor, clad in thigh-boots and leather waist-coat, washes his hands quickly, and switches an electric torch on to the blanketed figure. He pulls aside the blanket. The man's body is bare from the waist, crossed by wide bandages. A red-edged card is tied to the top button of his trousers. A padre stooping over a stretcher in the corner straightens himself, and comes across from a row of stretchers to stand on the other side. The examination is soon con-

cluded, and the doctor and padre stroll to the door, while the new arrival is lifted down and placed in the row of wounded who are all waiting for the ambulance. The padre's experienced eye has seen the damage, and the first question to the medical officer is little more than a formality. "No chance?" "No, only the matter of an hour or so, perhaps." "Is he conscious?" asks the padre. "Quite. He will be, too. He's your case now, padre. I won't send him further. Only cause him useless pain."

The chaplain walks across, pulls out a note-book, and goes down on one knee by the side of the new-comer's stretcher. A bearer, who has been giving him a drink, withdraws his arm from behind his head, and goes away.

"Chaplain here," he says, as the man opens his eyes. "Let's get your details" (writing from the red-edged card), "Much pain?"

"No, padre, not much." But the padre can see the tension in lips and forehead, and the grip of the arms on the stretcher.

"Now, can you give me your people's address? I'll send them a line to say I saw you."

The soldier's speech comes in breathless rushes. He seems rather excited, and anxious to talk, though it exhausts him to do so.

"I'd be glad—tell them not to worry—I'll soon be right."

A battery of field-guns begin firing from the bank above, and the man's lids flicker with the piercing reports. The padre's voice deepens.

"Old man, you soon will be all right." The eyes of the wounded man open wide, and his head goes back with a jerk.

"Eh? . . . Oh! . . . Is it come to that, padre?"

"Yes, lad," replies the chaplain gently, "it has." The man is excited and worked up. He speaks very rapidly.



"I'm sorry. I don't want to go. You never think, somehow. I want to live." The padre lays his hand on the lad's head.

"Boy, we've each one of us got to go through it alone. Yet we're not alone. Remember, old chap, that our Lord went through it all Himself alone. He knows what it's like, and suffers with us. Lean back, lad, and just let yourself lie back in God's arms."

There is the noise of several crumps outside, as the Germans commence counter battery work, as if all the gates of hell were thundering against the love of God, in conflict over that quiet figure. The soldier begins again.

"I've never been religious, padre. Never seemed to think, somehow."

"Yes," comes the answer, "but you're a child in your Father's house all the same. We none of us realise God's love. Only sometimes, when there seems no escape from it. And we look back, and think of the things we might have done to help. There's no end to God's patience, no limit to His love." The soldier sighs wearily.

"I've never done much good, I'm afraid."

"We can't judge ourselves. Anyway, you came out here, and you knew what it was like." There is a pause for a little. "God only wants us to be sincere in our loyalty and love, old man. It's never too late to offer Him that. I think there is a whole eternity of service ahead of you, boy. Are you sorry for all the chances you missed, and the mistakes?"

The voice is feeble now. "Yes, I am. I never thought about Christ. I believed it all, I suppose, but I never thought. You get with fellows, and you don't think. I've been saying my prayers again lately."

It is a big effort. The padre lifts his head again, and gives him a drink. Then slowly he resumes, speaking slowly and intensely.

"Can you feel, old man, that Christ loves you, and really cares? That He wants you always to work for Him? You know heaven isn't a place where you have to pass an examination. It's where Christ collects together those who will serve Him, and give Him back His love. Can you believe that?" There is a pause.

"Yes, padre, I believe that." The chaplain bends down to the other's face.

"Now, old man, is there anything worrying you, anything you'd like to be put right?" The soldier collects his breath.

"There's just one thing." And he whispers what it is. The padre then tries to explain in a few words that Christ gave His Church power through its officers to tell men that He forgives them when they repent sincerely, power to sign His name, to speak in token that their sins are taken away. A white poplin stole is drawn from his pocket and thrown over his shoulders, and he lays his hand on the soldier's head. Then slowly and distinctly he pronounces the absolution."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and, by the authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The soldier sighs and murmurs, "Thanks padre, there's a lot to forgive."

The padre goes to the door and looks out. It is raining now, and all is quiet. He comes back to the stretcher.

"What messages, old man?"

Slowly and at long intervals the soldier delivers them.

"Not to worry—I'll see them again. Tell my mother and sisters it was for them I fought through



the battle. Tell my younger brother he's to stop and look after the place." Then, after awhile, "Padre!"

"Yes?"

"Pain's pretty bad. Glad when it's over."

A new case comes in. The padre sees the new-comer is able to sit up, and goes back to the stretcher.

"I'll stay here. Hold on," he says, grasping the man's hand.

"Thanks," is the faint reply.

The medical officer comes up, and stooping quickly, injects morphia. The padre tightens his grip, and, laying his hand on the man's forehead, makes the sign of the Cross, as he recites loudly and firmly:—

"Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you; the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, and give you His peace, now and for evermore."

But what of those who slip so quickly by us into eternity, who crowd through our aid-posts in the feverish rush of an attack? We do all we can to catch their scattered senses as they hurry past on their lonely journey; to awaken them, if they have never faced it before, to the love of God that is calling them, trying to make the last conscious effort an acknowledgment and response to that love. How far do we succeed? We are content to answer, "God knows." It is our part, as those who are, in spite of all infirmities, His accredited messengers to make very clear, definite, and practical His loving response to their sacrifice. It is then that one realises so intensely one's own private weakness and unworthiness to deal with these great issues. Speaking for myself, it was at these times chiefly that I thanked God I was a priest, and that through my weakness there spoke, in no uncertain tones, His Church.

## HEAVY LADEN.

"THRO' MINE OWN HEART ALSO."

Scene:—A long white ward in a hospital in the North of France. The men are all "chest cases," most are propped up on pillows.

"Can you spare a minute, sir?"

"Certainly, old man." The chaplain pauses in his rapid walk down the ward, and, in defiance of "sister," seats himself on the man's bed. The summons is from a pneumonia patient, a man of strong physique to all appearances, but much exhausted and very tired.

"Just cast your eye over this," says the man, gasping.

"This" was a letter from the man's sister. It was a sordid and terrible story. The wife had "gone wrong" with every circumstance of horror. There were two children who, the sister said, were being neglected. The mother refused to part with them. The sister supposed it had something to do with the separation allowance. The soldier was, of course, frantic with worry; in fact, it was almost safe to say that worry was the cause of his illness, for he looked a man of splendid physique, and even the fierce hardships of the 1916-17 winter were not likely to have broken him without this. He wanted to send a cable, but had only a few shillings in his pay-book. The chaplain explained the system of cabling on deferred pay, and pulled a bundle of forms from his pocket. The cable was written, the perforated parts torn off, and put in the padre's pocket-book for posting to headquarters. The padre would also write to the rector of the parish, and put him on the track. He would not stop at police court proceedings, if necessary, to extricate the babies.

The sincere sympathy of the priest comforted the



man, who had felt the shame so bitterly that he had kept his secret close, though it was eating into his heart.

"Now, will you let me use my discretion as to whom I tell you story, old man?" said the chaplain. "I'll only tell it, of course, if I think we can do some good."

The man hesitated, and flushed hard.

"You know," said the padre, "doctors have to keep the line up to strength; they've got to seem hard, but they're really jolly good sorts. There might be just a chance of working your passage to Australia. Mind, it's only an off-chance. Still——"

"All right," said the soldier, wearily; "use your own judgment, padre."

"Well, God bless you, old chap. Pray hard. Fight the thing out. And buck yourself up. Don't get down. There are still the two kids, you know. Put up the best fight you can, old boy, and try to believe that God cares, and God helps, if only we give Him the chance."

After lunch the medical staff gather in the smoking-room for a few minutes before scattering to their wards and theatres. The padre strolls casually up to a little round-faced medical major.

"How's that chap X—— getting on in your ward, Major?"

"X——? Oh, not too well. Not as well as he ought to be, really. Still, he's holding his own."

"Dangerous?"

"Oh, well, of course, with pneumonia there's always a bit of risk. But he seems to have a decent constitution. No reason why he shouldn't pull through all right."

"Well," replies the padre, "he does not seem to me to be putting up much of a fight."

"That's just the trouble, padre," returned the major.

"Well, you know, major, the man is nearly insane with worry," remarked the parson.

"Oh! By Jove! Is he? He never said anything to me. What's his trouble? Did you fix him up?"

"No, I can't fix the poor beggar up. Read this."

The doctor read it, and swore softly.

"Poor devil, it makes your blood boil the way some of these chaps are let down." And he expanded further about the men responsible. "There doesn't seem anything we can do," he said in conclusion.

"You're sending him on to Blighty, major, I suppose?" the chaplain remarked innocently.

"Oh yes! As soon as he's a bit fitter to travel."

"Great thing, you know, major, if we could get him his trip to Australia."

"Yes," answered the major, "but we've got nothing to do with that here, of course. They decide that at headquarters."

"Still, major, I suppose they're a good deal influenced by your reports?" A light dawns in the major's eyes.

"Now, look here, padre," came the stern answer, "I've got to decide these cases purely on the medical side. I can't possibly let other considerations influence me."

"Oh! Of course, major," answers the padre quickly. "Wouldn't suggest it for a minute. Know enough about you chaps' professional code for that. Still, you know, I had an idea that worry was very bad for things like pneumonia. Strain on the heart and that sort of thing. Funny where you pick up these notions. Well" (looking at watch), "I promised to have a word with that boy in 'E' ward before his operation. They're going to amputate his leg, but it's the anæsthetic he's nervous about."

The padre hurries out.

"Well, major," says the colonel, who has been noting the conversation, "has the 'turbulent priest' been working points?"



"Yes, sir," laughed the major. "He wants a trip back to Australia for one of his pals." The mess laughed.

"Yes," said one of the others, "he wants me to evacuate a fairly mild case of trench feet, because the man has seven children and lives in London. Suggested that 'it might improve his general condition'." Again the mess laughed.

"Ah, well," said the major, "he seems to have got hold of a genuine case this time."

Meantime the padre prepares a case for the administration branch, and posts it to the senior chaplain (C. of E.), at Horseferry road. Future developments were probably along the lines of the strictest military medical propriety, but, however that may be, the chaplain treasures a grateful note posted from a troopship at a port on the way home to Australia.

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### QUIS SEPARABIT?

The long ward is in darkness, save for a single hurricane lamp out near the stove. An orderly, wearing a blue sweater, is dozing in a deck chair in front of the stove. There is a subdued murmur of quiet breathing, occasionally broken by a light sound between a sigh and a moan. A chaplain enters. He is clad in rubber boots, and shakes the snow from his great-coat on the mat. He treads noiselessly, but the orderly is alert at once.

"Is B—— asleep yet?" asks the visitor. B—— is a man whose spine is injured. He must lie absolutely flat. The orderly glides off in the darkness, and brings the chaplain to the bedside.

"Well, old man," whispers the chaplain, "how is it to-night?"

"I've been expecting you a long time, padre," is the rather querulous reply.

"Yes, old chap. I'm awfully sorry. I got into an argument over at the mess, and didn't notice the time. How are you feeling?"

"Pretty tired, and fed up. I can't get to sleep, somehow. Three months now; it's a terrible long time. I sometimes wish they'd finished me, and made a clean job of it."

"Now, old chap, don't let yourself get down," replies the padre firmly. "Hold on to yourself hard. You've just got to fight it out on your own. But don't feel lonely, lad. Try and realise that Christ, who suffered, is with you all the time."

A sigh and, "It isn't too easy sometimes, padre. You feel you can't stick it any longer sometimes."

The padre thinks.

"Look here, old man, I've never been so bad as you, but I've had some pretty difficult times. Try to get the meaning out of your pain, to feel God's love pressing on you. We can always penetrate to the meaning of it if we try hard enough. Pray your way through. Pray all the time like the deuce. Never mind the words. God doesn't worry about those things. And when you feel pretty down, remember even Jesus said, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Try to remember, though, He's your God all the time. It's not easy, old man, I know. But stick at it, and you'll get help from the other side. Faith is the link. 'Come unto Me all that travail and are heavy laden.'"

"Yes, I'll do my best. I do say my prayers now. You couldn't in the huts, very well."

"Well, how about a short prayer now, old chap?"

"Right, padre."

Padre: "O Lord, look with Thine infinite love and pity on this Thy little one. Help him to realise that Thou art ever with him, a sharer of his sufferings. O Lord! help him to feel the grip of Thy pierced



hands. Leave him not alone. O Christ! lay Thy healing hands upon him and deliver him, if it be Thy will, from his suffering. Restore him to health and his loved ones speedily, if it be Thy will. Help him to find Thee now, and possess Thee. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen." Then the padre lays his hand on the hot forehead. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, and of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty (here the sign of the Cross on the forehead) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be upon you, and remain with you always. Amen. Good-night, old son."

"Good-night, padre. You'll be round to-morrow, I suppose?"

"Yes, old chap. Good-night."

The padre buttons his leather waistcoat and great-coat and proceeds on his rounds.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Mont-des-Cats

It should be noted that rather more than half one's time (whenever one's battalion is not "in" or in support), is spent in billets in French villages, six to twenty miles back. About September of 1916 I lay hot, feverish, and sick in the midst of a large, beastly soft, four-poster bed in a small cottage in the tiny Belgian village of La Clytte. The line goes just in front of it now, fixed there after one of the fiercest combats of the war; but then a part of our brigade was "in" at Voomezeele, and La Clytte was the property of the reserve battalion and brigade headquarters. I lay in the dark, my internal sensations somewhat like those of Mark Twain's "Jumping Frog," while from the neighbouring kitchen came the, to me, ghastly sounds of eating and drinking, and revelry by night. A party of English officers from a neighbouring division were holding a dinner party.

Next day I found myself in bed in the large white-washed schoolroom of the village, and before night I had been deposited at the Trappist Monastery, on the now famous Mont-des-Cats. It was then used as a British Casualty Clearing Station. Our long bare ward had been the monks' dormitory. Off it opened little cells—small doorless rooms, the size of tiny bathrooms, quite unfurnished. The monastery was a very large block of buildings on the very summit of the small steep hill, which is very prettily wooded, on a somewhat diminutive scale (it cannot



be more than two or three hundred feet high); but the monastery stands quite clear of surrounding timber, and commands a perfectly wonderful view over the flattest country perhaps on the earth's surface. Near by the two little hills of Kemmel and Cassel slept in the sun of late summer, but, except these, for miles and miles around, there was no obstacle to vision. The beautiful green cultivated landscape (hop fields), dotted with little red-roofed villages, stretched west and south of us. Out of the ward window you could see the black shell-bursts in Ypres, not many miles away. They told us that on a clear day you could see from Armentieres to the sea. Great white sausage balloons floated in the clear sky, and the aeroplanes flickered above like tiny points of silver, pursued by little points of flame, and fleecy symmetrical patterns of smoke. Once a Boche machine came close overhead, flying very low. It was rather a weird sensation to see the great black crosses on the planes so clearly, but we were left unmolested.

Every day ambulances poured in and out, and all day the guns thundered; but the routine life of the monastery went on through it all. Many of the monks had been called up to the army, but those of them, too old to fight, were still in residence in one wing of the buildings. The Trappists are a silent order, and each day we saw them in their long brown working cassocks looped up to their knees, swinging down, always in single file, to their work in the fields. The garden where they could be seen taking their exercise was rather a beautiful walled-in enclosure. At one corner of the grass plot was a group of graves—English Lancers and German Uhlans, who had fallen here in a cavalry skirmish during the retreat in 1914.

Outside the walls of the monastery, but on the summit of the hill, there was a pretty little ancient

windmill, the old bricks showing clearly the fresh scar of machine-gun bullets. Here, when convalescent, I met a lot of schoolboys from Bailleul. These youngsters spoke French in school and a kind of mongrel Flemish when at home. With an eye to future dealings with landladies, I pulled out a notebook, and through a medium of French got the Flemish words for staple things to eat. The first person I tried them on was a girl in a little grocer's shop near Renninghelst. She replied to my enquiries, "Monsieur, I do not well understand you; perhaps if you expressed yourself in English we would try to understand." I think the Belgians, who had known the British for two years before they met Australians, really did think we spoke a different dialect. Outside one Belgian estaminet there ran the legend, "English spoke here, Australian understood." My young instructors came from Bailleul, near by, and even then found life a stern and dangerous business with night bombing. Now they must be homeless.

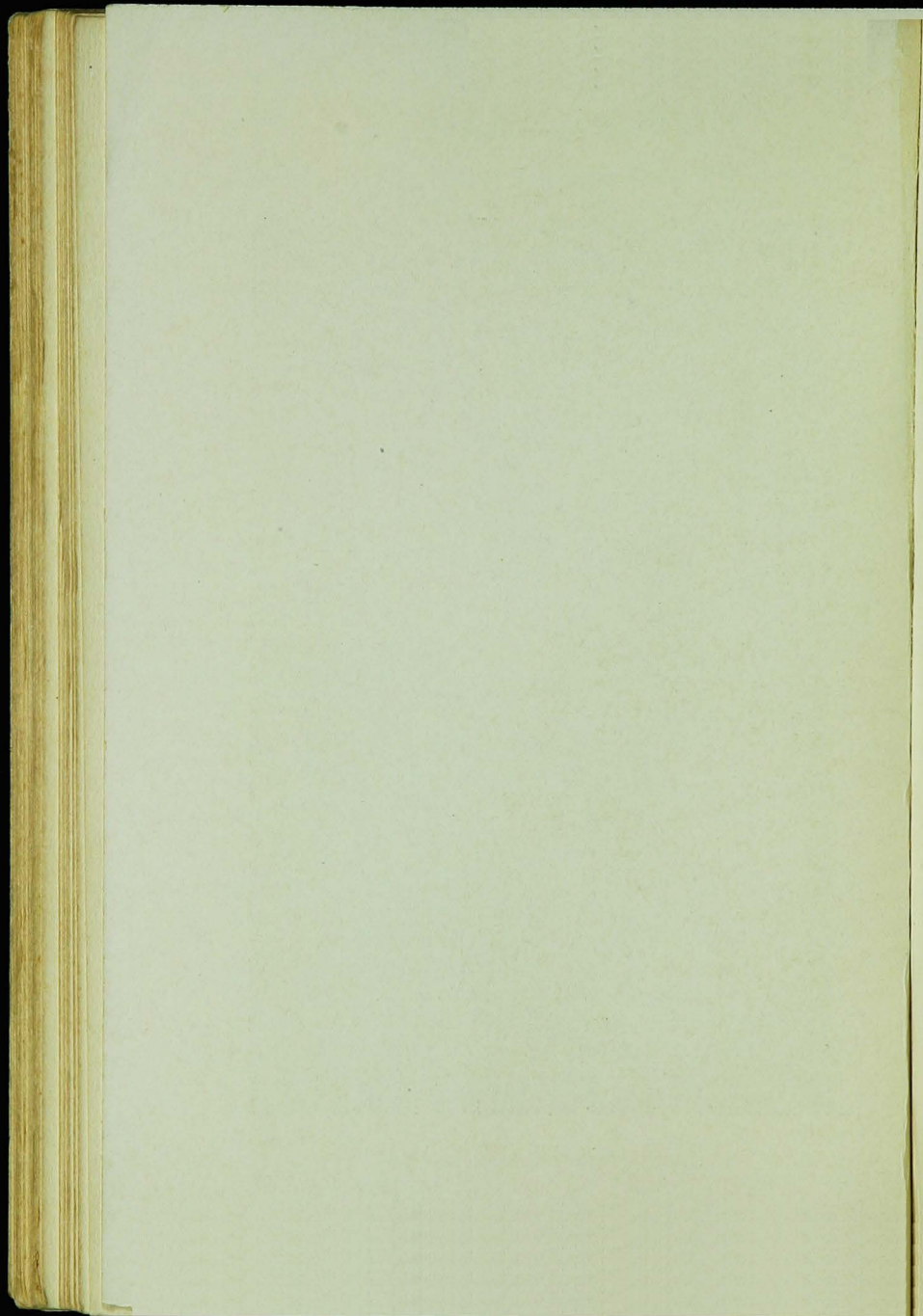
At Mont-des-Cats every night we had a beautiful firework display, the colored signal flares of both armies defining the closely locked lines on two sides of us for miles. Once, in the twilight, I saw a German sausage balloon brought down in a sheet of orange flame. Altogether life at the monastery was interesting, comfortable, secure, and over all hung an atmosphere of peace. One was near, but above the battle, in a serener clime. Later these three hills, Kemmel, Cassel and Mont-des-Cats, must have been raging volcanoes; but the cables have noted the fact that the monks refused to leave their monastery.





BUSH TYPES ON THE SOMME.

[See Page 33.]





## CHAPTER VII.

### Some Encounters with French Civilians

It was a quiet, peaceful, sunlit road, in a beautiful French country-side, miles from the guns; but here, under our eyes, was being enacted one of the little tragedies of war. A line of puffing, snorting traction engines were hauling a number of 8 inch howitzers back to be calibrated (whatever that process is), and an old woman, maybe 70, was trying to get her farm waggon, with an unsophisticated young horse in the shafts, past the formidable procession. The animal plunged and reared, but the old dame, very game but very frail, pulled and tugged at the reins, and plied the whip. It was a hopeless struggle, but she fought on, with the tears coursing down her old wrinkled cheeks. She seemed, as she was struggling, to express the soul of her country—a nation striving valiantly in tears. The C.O. of the iron fleet, on noticing her plight, stopped his thundering line, and a driver from one of the traction engines hauled her frightened horse past. So is the entente being built up with something deeper than a political arrangement—an understanding and a memory between two peoples.

The French peasant, as we have met him, lived true to his pre-war reputation for more than a Scotch care for the "siller," and, though the trait was sometimes exasperating, it led him often to take risks which excited the admiration of us all. I refer, not to the enterprising efforts to defy Mili-

tary Police, but to actual war risks undertaken for the "bawbees." In Albert, at a time when the town was under constant daily bombardment, and there was no place of refuge and scarcely a whole roof in the place, a French chef and his two sisters made a little officers' restaurant opening on to one of the squares. They gave you a meal which was a very pleasant break in the monotony of rations, and money was no object when you could get that. So they charged! Each bill seemed a little life insurance policy. But that was the only way they showed that they appreciated their risk. I myself was once there when three shells burst in the square outside, and the girl waitresses never faltered or hesitated in the rapid and skilful waiting on a hungry and impatient crowd, though at any second the next shell might well have landed amongst us.

As you went through the shattered streets of the little town, you would come across shops of infinite pathos. Between the walls of a half-unroofed dwelling, on a counter, consisting of a couple of planks resting on two piles of bricks, were displayed stocks consisting of various kinds of chocolates, and a few brands of cheap cigarettes. Behind the counter sat a weary old man or woman with a far away look in the tired old eyes. So, in the autumn of life, instead of the enjoyment of a peaceful journey down the hill, made pleasant by the small accumulated comforts and savings of a lifetime, these ancient bourgeois firmly faced life again—and death into the bargain—and, amidst the convulsed ruins of their lives' work, the shattered homes of their neighbours, the wreckage of familiar places, those old peasants—they are all old—carry on.

Who can fathom or express the thoughts of that ancient Frenchman, as he gazes across his counter of broken bricks at the estaminet where he has drunk his glass of wine, and, over a game of dominoes and a pipe, settled the affairs of nations every



## ENCOUNTERS WITH FRENCH CIVILIANS 51

night for forty years—that cafe whose heart has been torn out by a German shell?

I witnessed a rather pathetic incident when quartered near Fricourt with the Corps Cavalry, at the time I was chaplain to Corps Troops. There passed our headquarters hut one day a little procession of about twenty old peasants headed by a venerable priest. They were the inhabitants of Fricourt, allowed by the military authorities to come back that they might try and dig up their savings and valuables which they had buried when they fled from their homes. No one, when I saw them, could well have guessed that there had been a village where Fricourt stood. There was not even a continuous bit of foundation. The site had been seamed with trenches, German and British; so some of those peasants found their life's savings, and some did not. You can imagine the joy and despair. But the curé did not find his church. I have ridden through Fricourt very many times, and I do not know where that church once stood. A signalling officer told me that the old man sat on a stump and wept bitterly.

The peasants in Picardy are not very intelligent. They never seemed to understand the gastronomic needs of our men. There was only and always the inevitable "omelette." The Belgians knew better. When we alighted from the train behind the Ypres salient we first glanced at the church, to see whether we were within range, but within ten minutes an excited infantryman announced to me that "You could get steak and chips here." That met the situation much more adequately. The peasants, however, are not altogether mercenary. I was very tenderly nursed by an old French peasant woman for a week when, during a gastric attack, I was trying to dodge the consequent medical evacuation, and it was then that I got somewhat of an insight into how the French peasant in the war zone actually lives. I couldn't eat my army rations, and

she had to "do" for me. Money was no object that week, anyway. Meat was unobtainable, however, at any place nearer than Amiens, thirteen miles away, and our fare consisted of vegetable soup and bread. Not butter, not even margarine. All right for me, as an invalid; but it was her staple fare she was sharing with me. It was practically impossible even to get extra bread. The difficulties of transport were probably to blame for this, but hundreds of thousands of French people are enduring these conditions uncomplainingly. One billet sticks specially in my memory. I had sent my batman to reconnoitre. His report was, "Room pretty fair, sir—bed with sheets; but there's a kid wot 'owls all the time, and when it stops they 'its it on the 'ead and starts it again." But I found the room which I had been allotted had been used, among other things, for a fowl-run. In the best houses these are limited to the kitchen. In my best French I demanded that the room should be disinfected 'toute à l'heure!" Madam's reply, the inevitable "no compri." I tried all the methods of pronouncing "désinfecter" there were, and pronounced it on all the various systems I had learned at different times in my school days. Still "no compri." I showed it to her in the dictionary—"no compri" still. Finally she scrubbed it, and my batman put the top dressing on.

The windows would not open, and an elaborate wooden arrangement for pot plants prevented their ever doing so. I calculated the cheapest way was to break a pane, and madam was terribly upset, till I agreed to her scale of compensation. After that, whenever I smashed another (it was summer), she would come in and smile and bow, as though I were a dangerous lunatic that, if carefully watched and anxiously humoured, might be made a pretty fair source of profit.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### Wayside Sketches

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#### WHERE EMPIRE BEGINS.

Charing Cross station, ten minutes before the leave train goes.

Soldiers stand easy in groups in double ranks, their equipment at their feet, or pile into carriages, from every window of which portions of equipment or humanity soon protrude. The platform is thronged. Porters, clearing broad lanes through the crowd, push along truckloads of officers' valises, and stow them into the vans. The officers themselves, each with one or two "next of kin," walk up and down the long line of carriages. It is rather a poignant scene. That old, white-haired man has come to say good-bye to his son, an eighteen-year-old public school boy, who has just got his commission in the artillery. The lad looks rather splendid in his new uniform and leather gear, and the two make an imposing pair. The quiet self-consciousness of the boy is really rather impressive, when you come to reflect what he is there for. His predecessor, the medieval squire, would perhaps have made a little more noise with his newly won spurs. How many times, one wonders, has the old man of late years run down with his son to school? He cannot go with him now. On the same beat paces a general, past middle life, two rows of

ribbons on his breast, conversing quietly with a calm-looking, dignified lady, his wife. Several young officers walk up and down with their wives. Very young some of these, and one or two have so far forgotten themselves as to thrust their arms through their husbands' and clasp hands. One feels these must be newly married, for only this fact could excuse such a loss of self-control on the part of the upper English.

In spite of the surrounding turmoil, quiet and dignity mark the scene. There is infinitely less bustle than at, say, the Sydney express; but for him who has eyes to see it is not difficult to penetrate this bitterest moment of war. That parting bell at Charing Cross! What farewells it has sounded between those who seem just to have found each other. The courage and devotion of man and woman become one for an eternal moment, though their ways part for a season; they are together more perfectly than they could have been at the same fireside. Into it all the gong sounds, and flesh, but not spirit, must part. The moment of sacrifice is signalled by this brazen, clanging sanctus bell. For a few seconds the mask of dignity drops. The patrician lady places both her arms round the neck of her general, the old man kisses his boy. I haven't the heart to look at the married couples, but all seems a blur of khaki and furs. Then, in a second, all is as before. Straight-lipped women wave diminutive pocket handkerchiefs, smiling into eyes which smile back, while I lean back in my seat and thank the powers that be that my wife is in Australia.

As the long train pulls out deliberately for its run, the straightest in England, through sun-bathed Kentish meadows, into the valley of the shadow, my mind lapses on to our Australian troubles, then at their worst. A capitalists' war? Well, judging by his overcoat, that old man opposite my carriage was a capitalist, but he looked very white as he kissed his son good-bye.



## MARCHING OUT.

We had been relieved on Pozieres ridge, and from evening till morning little groups of men, mud coated and weary, had drifted down in single file to the bivouac and rendezvous on the brickfield by the northern side of Albert. There on the grass the weary men had laid down and slept. A light drizzle commenced to fall about 3 a.m., and kept on steadily so that breakfast in the dawn was not a great success. The companies formed up shortly after daybreak, the roll was called, and the battalion marched off on their weary tramp to the rest billets. For twelve interminable days the fourth division had been hammered by all the artillery the Germans could concentrate. Losses had been heavy, but we had held on, and now to the desperately weary nerve-racked men rest had come, if marching for two or three days under a pack of from 60 to 70 lbs. over French roads can be called rest. As we passed out of Albert on the poplar-lined Amiens road, a big gun (Greedy Gertie was its name) fired through a stable door, and its companion, Hungry Liz, responded from a bedroom window on the other side of the road. Further on still a large hay rick belched forth a sheet of flame with that sharp double report that is peculiar to the long range naval guns. The troops seemed too listless to notice. They marched as weary men, heads down and arms swinging listlessly, no life in the stride. So they plugged on, each man weighed down, not only by his weariness, but by the thought of some lost comrade whom he had come to love with that love passing the love of woman, which is peculiar to active service. People do not realise how keen the pain of this bereavement on service is. But the custom of the service demanded from this battalion that morning that they should sing on the march, and the song they sang was "Who were you with last

night?" It reads amusingly, doesn't it? But we who heard it almost wept.

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### THE SAME COLUMN THE NEXT DAY.

The rain poured down in torrents, the men were without greatcoats, which they were to pick up farther back. They wore their waterproof sheets around their shoulders, but the streams of rain trickled from hat brims, and all below the shoulder was sopping. The swing of the marching feet threw up little sheets of spray. They were not within 48 hours' march of a dry change, but it was a very different swing now, and the feet rang on the pavement with a firmer tread. Ripples of laughter and chaff passed down the ranks. Even the way they snapped the rain off their hats told its tale. The sober joy of men who knew that they had come well through a trial of their manhood underlay the mercurial fun. A brigade of Guards trundled past on motor lorries on their way to the line. Instantly from one end of the column there ran shouts. "Keb! Keb! Right out to the football match! Keb! Keb! Keb!" and as the motor lorries passed there rose the doleful chant that they reserve for the most cheerful moments:

"Old soldiers never die, never die, never die;  
Old soldiers never die, they simply f—a—de  
a—w—ay."

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### ONLY A MULE.

A cold dank morning in November and a thick mist, cut into spirals by damp draughts of air, covered guns and men. Twenty yards was about the limit of vision. The curtain seemed to have



fallen upon hostilities, and hardly a gun in the whole stretch of countryside was firing. They had their ranges and targets, of course, but atmospheric conditions make a difference. The "moods" of a gun vary, and the forward observing officers, crouching in their O. Pips (observing posts), chimneys, artificial tree trunks, and what not, could not observe for the shooting, so in the air of unwonted calm it reminded one a little of Sunday morning, a Sunday morning in the early stages of the creation of the world, before the water was separated from the land, before there was the light of sun or colour, warmth or life. A shell-pocked avenue, half creek, half road in front, long lines of transport flowing between dilapidated mud banks, drivers cursing and struggling through with their teams, occasionally a ruined tree trunk with one or two piteous broken branches looming out of the mist. I plugged down from Flers to Bernafay Wood. It seemed the peace that brooded on elemental chaos. But to my trained ear there came a sound like a distant express train which whistles in a tunnel; it changed swiftly but gradually to the note of an hysterical factory whistle, and culminated in a sound like a sack of old iron being emptied from a star at my heels. The Hun was shelling the Longueval water point by compass. I heard someone shout behind me, "He's done for," and went back. With relief, passing into unconcern, I noticed it was only a mule killed in the act of drinking by this random shell, and lying in a pool of blood.

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"ALBERT."

A little red city of shattered roofs—of ordered domesticities, into which shells have fallen, revealing, exposed and undisturbed, intimate little views of living and bedrooms, which seem to have been tidied

for destruction. The whirlwind came, and the first blast rent from these homes their walls, or roofs, and left much undisturbed. It created a queer feeling of arrested animation. The wall of a second story bedroom would need rebuilding before it was slept in again, but the bed was already made. Such was Albert at the beginning of the battle of the Somme. The town is cradled in low ridges. Those gently swelling ridges, that Nature seems to have meant for fruitfulness, are scarred and barren, and the creative life of the little town they shelter has now ceased; but a new and terrible greatness has been laid upon it. Through its main square circulated, by army corps and divisions, the men of a crusade. It is a place of danger—it is the open gateway to battle from which many will come back shattered for ever, and some will leave their bodies in the little graveyards in the hollows of those gentle, awful slopes. Thousands of men went up and came down from the battle, passing each other in that little main square where five roads meet. Nearly one whole side is occupied by the Church, a large red ugly building with roof shot in. From it rises a tall Byzantine tower, and leaning over the square at right angles to the tower there reaches the great gilt statue of the Virgin holding the Infant Christ, as if to protect and bless, over that rendezvous of thousands, and the shattered roofs. That gracious benediction does not shield from the things that hurt the body; but as one looks up at the symbol it does seem to protect from the demons of weariness and uncertainty, the doubt as to whether all this horror is worth while, the film of selfishness and hardness that would in time blind the vision of the soul. There are spiritual dangers in war, scarcely less fatal to the achievement of our purposes than those of the body, for victory is won by the extra ounce of sacrifice freely given. This shell-struck statue of the Virgin and Child did help to penetrate with its living symbolism the fog



of war which sometimes settles on brain and nerves, covering up the meaning of our cross. The tower hung for about two years by a few bricks, and a little before the Germans captured the place, in March-April, 1917, they struck it again with a shell, and it fell.

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“THROUGH THINE OWN HEART ALSO.”

I had noticed them on the platform at Charing Cross, an elderly couple; the old man in a long frock coat and a hard hat; the old lady had beads on her dress. They looked rather bewilderedly round the platform thronged with noisy soldiers, and seemed always in the way of the porters racing about with trucks of officers' valises. In spite of the novelty of their situation, it seemed as though only a small portion of their minds was on their surroundings. I saw at once what the purpose of their journey was, and I told my porter their errand, and suggested he should put them in a quiet second-class carriage with some returning warrant-officer. He was all human, and went to his errand with more earnestness than ever he had earned a tip. I saw the old chap somewhat nervously offer a whole bundle of papers to the red-capped R.T.O. at Folkestone, and that over-driven individual directed him to a red-capped military policeman, who impatiently dug out ones that he wanted. Again I saw them on the crowded steamer, standing against the rail amid the men of a dozen units, and made a circuitous and cautious flanking approach. They looked a queerly isolated pair, conspicuous by contrast with the few other civilians, who were obviously wealthy invalids—chest cases for the south of France, on special “passports.”

On board we had every sort of uniform, and great numbers of all ranks, from a Russian general to Cook-

ney recruits. The two stood alone in silent unconscious dignity. I began with the weather, and in a little while learned that they had come down the night before from the north of Scotland. Yes, on being reminded of it, they were tired. It was twelve o'clock, and I had no difficulty in suggesting to them that they would be the better for something to eat. So I steered them down to the crowded and noisy saloon, and piloted them through the meal, changing a few coins for them.

We came up on deck again, and by now the old chap knew that I knew. He drew out his papers in a bundle. It was as I thought. The War Office regretted to inform him his son was dangerously ill in — Hospital, Boulogne. Enclosed were instructions about railway warrant and passports. He was to report to the medical authorities at Boulogne. Did I know the place? Yes, I did. I told him what I knew of the arrangements, explaining to him how to find the Church Army Hostel from the quay. There they would put him up. If he wanted to stay on longer than stated in his papers he must get the doctor at the hospital to see about it for him. I would show him the office of the assistant medical landing officer. He would see that he was taken out in an ambulance. Perhaps they would have to wait a little while. I gave the old lady a short note to the matron, just to give her an excuse for introducing herself. No, I didn't know that particular matron, but I knew enough about matrons to know what I was doing. For the sympathy that knows what can be done for a woman in trouble, and what can't, commend me to a hospital matron. Anyway, there would be a cup of tea for the old lady as she came from the bedside of her son.

What philosopher or psychologist will ever explain what the meaning of tea is to a woman? He would need the penetrative heart of a poet, for learning would not carry him to the heart of this mystery. I



did not dare to talk to the mother, though her composure was more complete than the old man's. He told me his son's career, and ended, "He's a good lad—a good lad." He murmured it like a refrain. There was confidence and pride and hope in his sorrow.

But there are limits to emotion on the deck of a troopship. I got him talking about his "meenister" at B——, who had been "awfu guid." He was a Presbyterian elder, so I thought it well, being an Episcopalian, to lead him into mild argument. Thus we got safely to Boulogne, and I left him at the door of the little hut of the medical landing officer.

"We're much obliged to ye, sir," he said. "I wad like to feenish our discussion some other time. If ever you're in oor part of the country——" He remembered, and the gates of his sorrow closed upon him. "Good-bye, sir," he said. "Ah'll write ye a line."

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### THE RETREAT AT SUNSET.

*"Come Home! Come Home! Come Home!" (Bugle).*

We had been at Trinity College together, and had dined together in the little officers' restaurant at Albert, the staff-captain, the engineer and myself, who am a padre, and we wended our way back to our jobs in the long evening twilight. It was a perfect evening. The very gallant efforts of that enterprising French family, who ran the place, had given us a dinner which was rather a landmark as dinners went then. We had enjoyed it thoroughly, although three shells had landed in the square outside, and as we smoked our way leisurely homewards, felt deeply at peace with the world, and, temporarily, almost not at war with the Hun. As we entered Becourt Wood (which, in those days of early August, 1916, really was a wood), we turned aside from the

road, and as we topped a little rise among the trees a little cemetery was revealed, cradled in the hollow at our feet. We sat down on a log and smoked in silence for a bit. We had been "reminiscing" of the old Trinity days. The small well-ordered cemetery lay bathed in the soft moonlight at our feet. The caps of the sleepers were laid on the graves, and this gave the scene a homely look. Suddenly the staff-captain, who had been a brilliant classic, lifted his pipe from his mouth, and began quietly to recite that most perfect piece of Greek prose ever written—Thucydides' account of Pericles' speech over the Athenian dead, in a conflict strangely analogous to the struggle which was again beginning to break into the quiet of this evening. The quiet flow of Greek ceased, and, in response to a glance from the engineer, he struck into Bridges' fine translation. "There was none of those, who, preferring the further enjoyment of his wealth, was thereby grown cowardly. They fled from shame, but with their bodies they stood out the battle; and so, in a moment big with fate, it was from their glory, rather than from their fear, they passed away. And when your country shall appear great to you, consider, then, that her glories were purchased by valiant men, and by men that learned their duty; by men that were sensible of dishonour when they came to act; by such men, as though they failed in their attempt, yet would not be wanting to the city with their virtue, but made unto it a most honourable contribution. And having each one given his body to the commonwealth, they receive instead thereof a most remarkable sepulchre, not that wherein they are buried, so much as that other wherein their glory is laid up, on all occasions, both of word and deed, to be remembered evermore; for to famous men all the earth is a sepulchre. Be zealous therefore to emulate them, and, judging that happiness is freedom and freedom is valour, be forward to encounter the dangers of war."



He ended, grunting that he always kept something like that in his kit to keep from getting mouldy. Silence fell again, and the dim roll of the guns made itself heard. "I like that query of old Tacitus," I said, and I quoted in English, painfully and inaccurately, "If, as wise men think, great souls die not with their bodies, if there be indeed a resting place for spirits when they have left their earthly habitations, rest thou there in peace."

"Well," said the engineer, rising and turning from the quiet cross-crowned mounds to where the shooting Veray lights marked the line. "I'm glad I've something more definite to go on," and he muttered shamefacedly, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so——"

The engineer, mine own familiar friend, transferred soon after to the Flying Corps, and has been posted "missing" since August, 1917. But there is no "missing" column in the muster rolls of God.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Washing Days in Picardy

*"The moving waters at their priest-like task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores."*

—Keats.

From a distance he looked like an ancient paladin as he rode, with what ultimately appeared as a pair of pink underpants draped gracefully over one shoulder, a tin hat stuck on the back of his head, weary eyes dimmed by successive sleepless nights; but lit, though mistily, with great anticipation. The array of clean underclothing dependent from the arms and shoulders of a very dirty uniform marked his destination as the Divisional Baths. Behind him straggled a long line of weary, dirty, tired men clutching multi-coloured towels, and soap—terrible as an army with banners. His stars were veiled by the brightness of the glorious apparel he was bearing, and hoped to wear. But when the clouds of glory trailing from his shoulders were lifted, I knew that he was a lieutenant-colonel. I moderated, therefore, the tone of my brisk query as to the whereabouts of the baths, and tacked a "Sir" on to my next question, and I joined him in his quest.

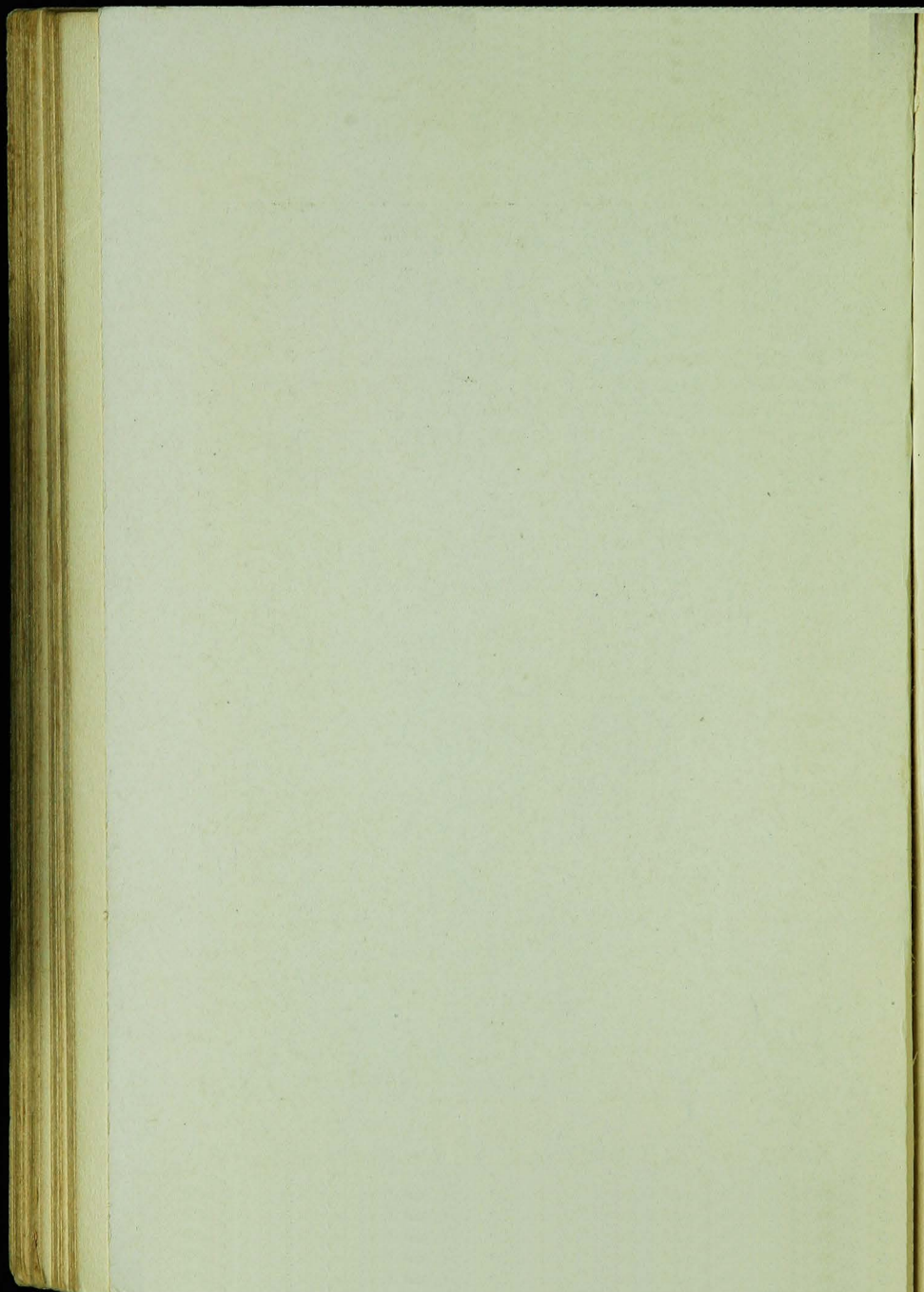
Our goal was an ex-brewery. The courtyard was thronged with busy A.M.C. orderlies. To the right of the entrance was a shed full to the roof of miscellaneous underclothing its wearers had parted from without regret, though the parting was for ever. It





A CHOCOLATE JOINT, ALBERT.

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is impossible to be refined in alluding to the faithful companions of unwashed humanity. The veil of silence has been lifted by the genius of the present Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge—a distinguished zoologist, and the author of that great work, "The Minor Horrors of War."

But it is an irony of nature that the war of nations should be made so much more unendurable by the ceaseless war which man, as an individual and alone, must wage with his most intimate of trench companions, that long, losing battle which is terminated only for a season at Divisional Baths.

The spirit of man is truly unconquerable, and these lurking foes are being held and conquered. The development of the system of Divisional Baths has been equal to that of any of the other departments of war. They are pushed right up now into the danger area for the sake of the men's health, and orderlies and officers pursue their huge and endless labour for the health and cleanliness of the army at hourly peril of their lives. But in the days of which I write they were few and far between, the goal of much suffering, the guerdon of unwashed weeks.

The piles of underclothing then shed would mysteriously vanish, pass through steam laundries, be darned by mysterious unseen beings, sent back to the baths, and re-issued to troops again. One remembers that story in the "First Hundred Thousand" of a Scot who received back, to his keen disappointment, an animated shirt. "Ah, weel, Jock," says his mate, "maybe they're no dead yet, but eh mon! they must have had an awfu' fricht." Nous avons changé tout cela.

One enters the Brasserie. Dimly through the steamy mists one can discern figures undressing, and huge round vats of hot water with steam rising in clouds. Human heads arise from the water, and dim figures loom out of the mist. There is a ceaseless

round of surf breaking on unseen shores. It is a weird scene half revealed in the billows of vapour. As one stands at the entrance one seems to be gazing through—

“Magic casements opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.”

We walk through an atmosphere compounded of air, water and humanity, and go behind a strip of canvas to the part reserved for officers, in every respect the counterpart of the rest. Orderlies empty the huge brewing vats, and fill them up with very hot water, and it is peace for a season.

Divisional Baths play an important part in the social life of a division. A battalion of infantry or a brigade of artillery is a very self-contained organism. Duty is constant, and when leave is granted you get right away. Nearly all units are constantly on the move, and it is seldom possible to find out where the other units are, so there is little opportunity for “looking up” one’s friends, and practically all meetings are chance encounters on the roads or at the baths. But never since the days of the later Roman Empire, when they constituted the most important centre of social life, and dandies and philosophers foregathered in the warm water, have baths, played such an important social role. Here you meet old schoolmates, university friends, colleagues whom you last saw maybe in a lecture theatre, at the ‘varsity, or a tea-room on the Block. It is a brief meeting with many old friends whom the chances of war have sundered, and who, here in the waters of Jordan, meet for a moment. Here is often spoken the “Ave atque vale,” which means so much on service, where the comradeship of the spirit seems unconsciously to bridge all gulfs of space and time.

We are not allowed long in the water. The bathing of a unit must be done to time-table. On the battle front the batteries and battalions are forever



circulating, and the work of bathing must go on all night and day. As the men come out an imperturbable N.C.O., his face set like flint against complaints, issues clean darned garments. "A long stern swell that deals out underclothes," I've heard him called. The host passes continually through the healing waters, and takes the road with a healthier, cleaner, saner view of life. Truly they who labour amid the steam are doing a work worth while, for it is a serious business—the secret sorrow—maddening, humiliating, and depressing.

Washing in the army is nearly always a struggle. The washtub is, as the drill book says of the Lewis gun, "essentially a weapon of opportunity."

It is a true story of General Birdwood that on one of his perambulations, on a certain warm morning in a valley behind the Somme, he beheld afar off a man trying to bathe in a "dixie" full of water. Now a dixie holds about three cups of tea. "Hullo, old man!" cried the general sympathetically, as he came up from the rear, "are you trying to have a bath in a dixie?" "Yes," grunted our hero without looking round, "but I wish I was a — canary."

The mud in the early part of the winter 1916-17 was appalling. Later came the hard frosts, and things became more comfortable. But the mud, while it lasted, was sometimes thigh deep, and penetrated everything. It flowed into dug-outs, coated clothes, and couldn't even be kept out of the food.

When I first went out I acted on the principle that wherever there was a tap there was a bath, and my batman used to sigh with relief when he got me safely past one. But possibly placed taps are few and far between. In the villages the civilians must be considered, further up the taps are used by the constant stream of water parties and animals. Nevertheless I have bathed in a sugar factory, on a railway station, and in one of the main streets of Albert. My first bath was in Bécourt Wood, the day

after I first joined up. My senior divisional chaplain anointed me with his hot shaving water, and the senior chaplain of the Army Corps scraped my vile body with a tree.

On our way up to the Somme battle for the second time we billeted in a tiny village called Rubempré, not far from Amiens.

It was now or never for my washing, and I sent my batman down to offer my landlady a few francs for the loan of her wash tub. To my amazement he returned with the message that she had refused on the ground that she was using it herself. Now French landladies do not, as a rule, refuse money, and this housewife's home, though clean, spoke eloquently of poverty. I went down to investigate, and found I had to deal with a woman of considerable refinement, whose pride was a little hurt at my unceremonious offer. I got into conversation with her, and found that her husband was the Huguenot pastor of the village, and that he and her two sons were at the front. "Pas tués, pas blessés, pas encore," she said sadly in answer to my enquiry. She was left alone amid that perpetual stream of foreign soldiers, and life was somewhat lonely and difficult. But her courage was the fine purifying flame of patriotism that is a cleansing fire in French national life. I explained to her my need, how that, maybe, I would not be able to get any clean clothes for three weeks. She handed over her washtub at once with the air of a woman who is proud to give. She would have none of the money. "It is a very little thing, m'sieur," she said in English, and then, without any sense of the grotesque, that quick phrase that lightens their tremendous burdens, and sanctifies their waiting and their sorrow—"C'est pour la France!"



## CHAPTER X.

### Discipline

I am visiting traffic control posts, and, incidentally, thinking of likely sites for establishing free coffee stalls for men going to and coming from the line.

It has been a long day, and the close of it finds me near the spot where the communication trench to the front line leaves the road. It is nearly dark on the next rise; smashed tree trunks stand gaunt on the horizon, and the bare, brown earth rolls away in broken outlines on each side. Occasionally two loud reports, very sharp and close at hand, break the stillness, and the infinite vista of shell holes, the indistinct line of smashed trenches and broken wire flash into vision and vanish as suddenly behind the curtain of darkness. Those guns, I reflect, are not so near as I thought.

The succeeding stillness is broken by a metallic rhythm. The darkness shows up sparks on the frozen road, and round a bend appears a short line of men in single file marching with even tread at accurate intervals and in perfect silence. The slung rifles stand out in relief from the rather blurred outlines of the human forms, for the men are wearing their waterproof sheets over their shoulders. The leading figure, distinct by the absence of the projecting rifle, is the platoon commander. The march was planned a week ago. It probably started at mid-day. It has reached this point at the desired moment.

There is a low-pitched order addressed by the

officer to the man behind him. The snake bends, and the metallic ring is succeeded by the dull thud of the men's feet on the duck-boards. A waiting figure stands near the entrance to the sap. Another snake appears; a low voice, and a lifted arm, and it becomes motionless. There is not quite the required distance between platoons, and there must be no risk of jamming in the saps. The communication trenches are regularly shelled, and, however cleanly the relief be carried out, there are nearly sure to be casualties.

But if the Boche should learn by any little carelessness the movement that is going on over that shattered maze of trenches 50 yards to his front, a maze deep in mud and in places pounded back into the mud from which it was born, it is quite probable that the battalions concerned may lose two-thirds of their effectives.

The movement in some cases lasts all night, sometimes it will have to be finished by daylight, and co-operation must be maintained by orders passed accurately along a line of 800 men. The variation of a word through a moment's inattention, may have serious consequences. Each sergeant must have his section responsive to every sign, and during the whole of the movement incessant observation must be maintained, the delicate lines of communication, an army's nervous system, must not suffer in clearness or precision. This keeps the front lines in touch with brigade and division, the units on the flanks, and the field batteries and groups of "heavies," guns of all calibres massed, may be, miles to the rear. For at any moment the flowing line may be required to stiffen itself to defend, to think and act clearly and together through its whole length, and with all the other units with which it interacts. The shield of darkness is not impenetrable. The blinding white light of flares shoots out continually, and the movement must be able to stand this test.



The front line keeps its connection with the artillery by means of coloured flares. Most of these do not seem to the outsider to mean much; but should a certain arrangement of coloured lights appear in the heavens, it is answered by an immense flood of sound as hundreds of guns open fire. The answering wall of thunder meets it a second or two later. The infantry lies down in its trenches and waits.

Should it be the S.O.S. signal, however, reserves and supports are rushing up through the saps. Now in the hour of black darkness the work of the airmen is put to the test. Likely roads will be searched by the heavies for reserves, and other batteries will open with measured rapidity on enemy gun positions mapped by the planes during the preceding weeks. If they have discovered the real avenues of approach, those supports will come up through two or three lines of living fire. Should they have made a minute error, the aforesaid supports may be deafened by noise and bespattered with mud, but hardly a man hurt.

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### NO FALTERING.

In all this inferno the human will must not falter. Everything moves with regulated speed. The runners go back to battalion headquarters with situation reports from the companies, the signallers are methodically finding breaks in their wires and effecting rapid repairs. The wireless men are taking messages to the divisional headquarters and the artillery; bombs are got ready, the liaison officer is holding a business-like conversation with his artillery headquarters. Trench mortars and machine guns, each are being methodically fed by their crews with earthquakes.

Earth and sky are a chaos of darkness and variegated light. The ground trembles, the sound seems

to move in solid waves, which sweep the speech from one's lips, men are dying. But he who lives must think clearly, judge calmly, be swift to obey.

After hours of this, one of our battalions charged on Mouquet Farm, and the wounded, as they were carried into the aid-post, were boasting that there was not three seconds between the first man "over" in the first wave, and the last. And now abideth courage, judgment, discipline; but the greatest of these is discipline.



## CHAPTER XI.

### Some Notes on War Psychology

The man in the line is the man in the street, so it is difficult to generalise. The terrific pressure of novel and trying conditions do, however, provoke certain fairly constant reactions. Nature comes to the rescue of her oppressed children in surprising ways. The most marked difference in ways of thought and feeling which men develop are protective states of consciousness. The weight of horror, dreariness, and suffering is crushed on to the nervous system, which soon establishes means of resistance and self-protection, and new methods of keeping itself going. When you first join up you are haunted by a feeling of uncertainty. All planning and forward thinking is conditional on the big "if," and the "Great Perhaps" looms very near and impressive when it is split into a series of blazing, thundering, crashing queries. For days together, at no moment, and for no time that can be reckoned, are you safe. The risk mathematically may not be very great, but it is continual. It is not, as a rule, evenly spread; for, while this condition of things covers all the time you are in the forward area—within perhaps seven or eight miles from the line—the degree of danger here depends more especially on your proximity to points worth shelling—communication trenches, cross-roads, dumps, light-railways, sidings, etc.

The movements of nearly all men are according to plan. The individual at first carries with him always

the feeling of uncertainty, but he is not worried with the responsibility of deciding his own acts under pressure. To anyone, within limits, master of his movements, the position is more difficult. With the staff-officer, specialist, or chaplain, there is always the temptation to ask of any dangerous bit of ordinary patrol work, "is it worth while?" This has given rise to the humorous proverb that a visiting staff-officer should provide himself with two errands at different parts of the line, and go to the one that is not being shelled. Definite duties make definite demands, but such a lot in the ordinary day's work is left to the individual. The query whether a certain risk is worth taking is a dangerous one, and must be settled as soon as it suggests itself. Dangerous, because very rarely in any specific instance is a risk worth while. Death is irrevocable, and there are the people at home to think about, and the particular round of the trenches or whatever it is can nearly always wait. Here is the danger. Once you give way in one definite instance, you give way all along the line. You must take life as a whole, and live it dangerously in the Nietzschean sense, as far as may be shutting your angels out. At first I used to go about, playing a childish game of "dares" with myself, laying wagers, so to speak, with my self-respect as the stake. After a time, the keenness of this feeling of uncertainty wears off (fear is different and more physical, I think), the tension of introspection relaxes, and you become more completely absorbed in the external details of your job.

But the great antidote, which comes to the help of most, is fatalism. There grows up a belief in Fate or Destiny, which eliminates the strain of uncertainty to a considerable extent. It is very variously expressed. With some it is: "If your number isn't on it, you're all right;" with others, it is the trust in a heavenly Father, who knows what is



eternally best for them. It is extraordinarily powerful, this feeling of Destiny in a world where the only alternative is the acceptance of violent accident in chaos.

I owe a good deal to William James, but far back in the dim academic background of my mind, I was amazed to see how little trace there was of belief in a pluralistic universe—a world not yet reduced to order, and harmonised as the expression of a single purpose. To me, every hour seemed to force home James' idea of a God, who offers His leadership and comradeship in the decisive struggle for the redemption of a half-wild, half-saved, world, to a world of absolutely free individuals who are taking the consequence of acceptance or rejection. And though, with my brain, I believe that the war happened contrary to God's will, in consequence of the refusal of His revealed aims, and proffered fellowship, I could feel this consciousness of Destiny as strongly as any private. It is the very foundation of mental stability under war conditions. Julian Grenfell perfectly expresses it:—

“And when the burning moment breaks,  
And all things else are out of mind,  
And only joy of battle takes  
Him by the throat and makes him blind.

“Though joy and blindness he shall know,  
Not caring much to know, that still  
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
That it be not the Destined Will.”

Fear is a mainly physical sensation and, I am inclined to think, practically universal. It would comfort many recruits to recognise this. Courage is the conquest of fear by the thinking man, and victory of the will over a rebellious imagination, and an in-

surgent nervous system. I have known very many brave men, but only one fearless man, I think, and he was a public nuisance, and a source of danger to any stretcher-bearing section to which he was attached. He was a churchwarden in a Melbourne suburb and, being well over forty, should have known better. But he was absolutely without a sense of danger, and would sit on a parapet to watch a night bombardment, an achievement more likely to win the approval of journalists of the baser sort than that of his long-suffering companions.

Fear, I think, and have seen it written, is related more to the apprehension of being torn about, than of imminent death. Modern warfare, with its infinite variety of impressive sounds and noises, and its exquisite anticipations, is tremendously hard on the nervous system. You can hear a shell coming (unless it is a high velocity one) several seconds before you hear the burst, and the pitch of the note as it comes nearer gives you an indication of how close it's going to be. In a front line trench you can actually see vast earthquakes on their way to you, in the shaps of "rum jars," "hair brushes," "plum puddings," etc., usually put up three at a time, so as to induce a pleasing uncertainty in the anxious spectator as to where to go.

If there was any chance of getting anywhere safer—finding a better 'ole—during a strafe, I always felt anxious till I got there, but my frantic scramble along the trench ended, and the best possible achieved, my agitation fell from me like a garment.

The passive endurance of great danger is not such a keen anguish as one would think. There comes a feeling of detachment, the sense of being a spectator of your own fate. You experience a feeling of being cut off from the world for the time being, and wondering whether you will ever get back. I remember lying on my stomach in a shallow ledge in the trench



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wall near Geudecourt during a heavy bombardment, and, during the waits and crashing thuds which shook the earth round me, the thought came, "What an infernally silly way of spending a Sunday afternoon."

I have never been over the top, so shall not attempt any description of what it feels like. Our brigadier (the late General Glasfurd), was rather a martinet with his chaplains, holding that no man should take risks other than those belonging to his job. He interpreted this very liberally in respect to his own work, however, taking more risks than most brigadiers would feel justified in doing. We were told off to aid-posts, and the care of the walking wounded during a "stunt;" and, being on the lines of communication, often got our fair share of shells, but "going over the bags," the climax, the epic moment of army psychology, is known to me only through the experiences of other men, and into these notes it has been my plan to put nothing that is second-hand. Those lines of Grenfell's I have quoted in another connection, seem fairly to describe the experience, and many men have told me that they have felt in the time of waiting that peculiar detached feeling I have been trying to describe; tightening up in the last half-hour to the same sort of acute, fretting anxiety about small details that the oarsman feels about his oar, thwarts, slide, and the fit of his trousers, before the pistol goes.

What of the horror of war so sickening and intolerable at first? Nature's answer to that is callousness. Horrible sights cease to be accompanied with brain-storms of sickness or repulsion, waves of pity or emotional violence of any kind. There comes a matter-of-fact acceptance of them. There is no use in my giving examples which would merely intensify the horror in you, and still further prevent you understanding what I mean. Donald Hankey calls it

"Nature's anæsthetic." It is Nature's anæsthetic, and no one is to blame. There is a limit to the callousness, of course. It paralyses the emotions, but it does not, for example, prevent everything possible being done for a wounded man. The callousness seems to cover all the higher centres of thought and feeling. Men become hard. Spirituality of any kind seems to wither. The mental outlook narrows to the point of killing Germans. It would be heartbreaking if one didn't realise it were temporary. It is amazing how quickly in hospitals, in the absolute cleanliness of environment, bathed in comfort, rest and peace, surrounded by the refined dignity and kindness of womenfolk, the sufferer sheds this outer skin. Even up in the line there is enough of the old self left to give a constant sense of something lost. A padre can observe these things, for by his calling he is removed from their horrible duty with its psychological reactions; he is seen trying to help wounded, to arrange concerts, to relieve suffering of various sorts, and generally trying to keep alive the sense that over all this sorrow and blasphemy against life there is a God of love. So men give him the benefit of their inner consciousness, whether they agree with his position or not, and I have often felt when officers or men seem to be deliberately inflicting upon me all their war callousness, that they were trying to thaw themselves out a little at the fires of humanity they expected me to keep burning. It humbles you to realise that you stand for peace, and the half-forgotten decencies of thought and feeling. You have simply got to set your teeth and hold on to your belief in the finer things of life, and the faith that these will come back to their own. You who read will understand, I think. All the blood pressure of the soul is drawn into this great pulsing thread of purpose, the destruction of the enemy. All else seems starved. So you people at home, who can de-



velop normally, sanely, and finely, to the fulness of your spiritual capacity, remember that it is by reason of the fighting man's sacrifices that you can do it, and let us further remember that their sacrifices do not consist merely of physical and material things, but include the precious things of the spiritual life. The flabby optimism of many of our preachers when they talk of the effect of war on character is very distressing. I am a parson myself, and I know that nothing can be built on moonshine. Only the truth, bare and bitter, can be the foundation of our efforts.

And though men have become indifferent to the sight of death, there is no indifference to the burial of the dead. No ancient Greek attached more importance to the rite than does the modern Australian private. The ancient Greek did think that his ceremonial handfuls of earth enabled the wandering spirit to get home; the modern Christian does not believe that burial makes any difference to the dead, but that it is a service for the living; yet back of our men's minds there would seem to be the vague feeling that it does make a difference, and that there is some spiritual fact corresponding to it in relation to the departed. Theologically untenable, perhaps, but when I realised the strength of this feeling I certainly felt more justified in running risks with other people in burial parties.

The hourly presence of death and the dead do not, as many people fondly imagine, sharpen men's appreciation of the nearness of eternity, and so cause this consciousness to react back upon the conduct of life, enabling men to view life more clearly, "*sub specie aeternitatis*." Rather the opposite. Death to the individual loses its terror and sting. It becomes merely an every day incident in life. The dividing line seems almost rubbed out. The dead comrade is regarded as simply a being, detailed for duty elsewhere. It seems to me that this view is more Chris-

tian than the other, though too often the loss of the element of fear is accompanied by a sense of the futility of preparation of any sort. Men don't want to make a bargain at the last moment. Natural enough, but it caricatures the Christian idea that allegiance, if sincere, is always accepted; that it is always possible to break with the past. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

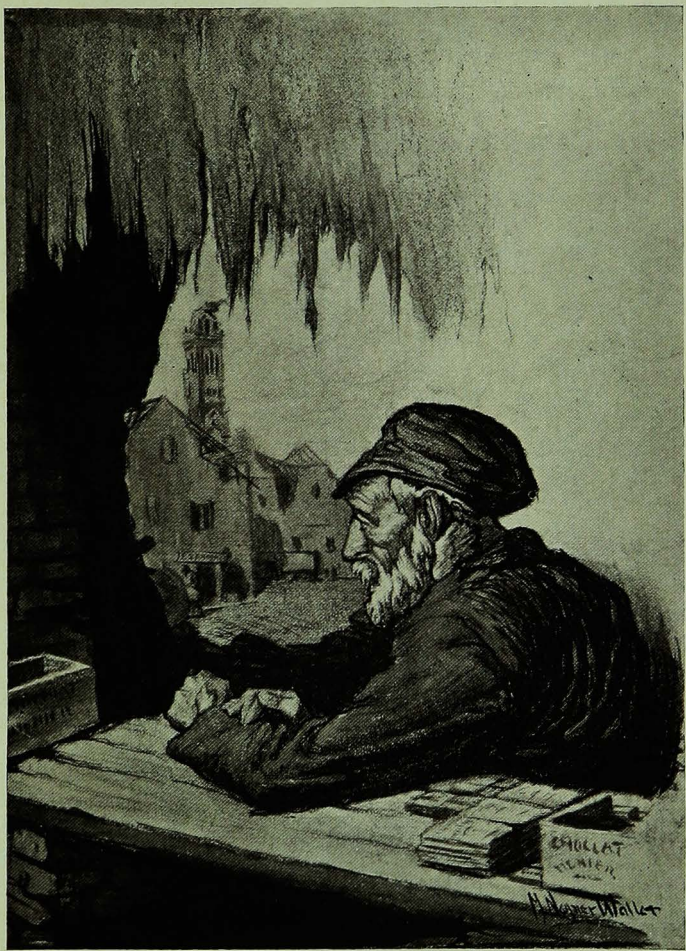
I am inclined to the view that the majority of men still believe in a life beyond. Those who believe at all seem certain. I have elsewhere noted two other marked characteristics, the automatic selfishness of the instinct of self-preservation, the feeling of relief when we realise that the trouble is not coming our way, and the response of humour to the challenge of circumstances, the mind violently regaining its equilibrium. Mark Tapley would only have been one of many thousands in the A.I.F.

When one hears the incessant growling of men in a fairly comfortable base camp, or the comparatively luxurious idleness of returning troopship, one asks: "If they do these things in a green tree, what will they do in a dry?" Yet men up to their thighs in mud within 50 yards of the Boche do not growl, but make improper jests.

How far do war aims constitute a strong source of inspiration to men in their long suffering? There is a real instinct with most men that they are doing something decisive and necessary for the future of the world. There is also the strong hope with most that the world will be a better place for those who come after, because of what they have endured, and a determination that, if they survive, to see that it is so.

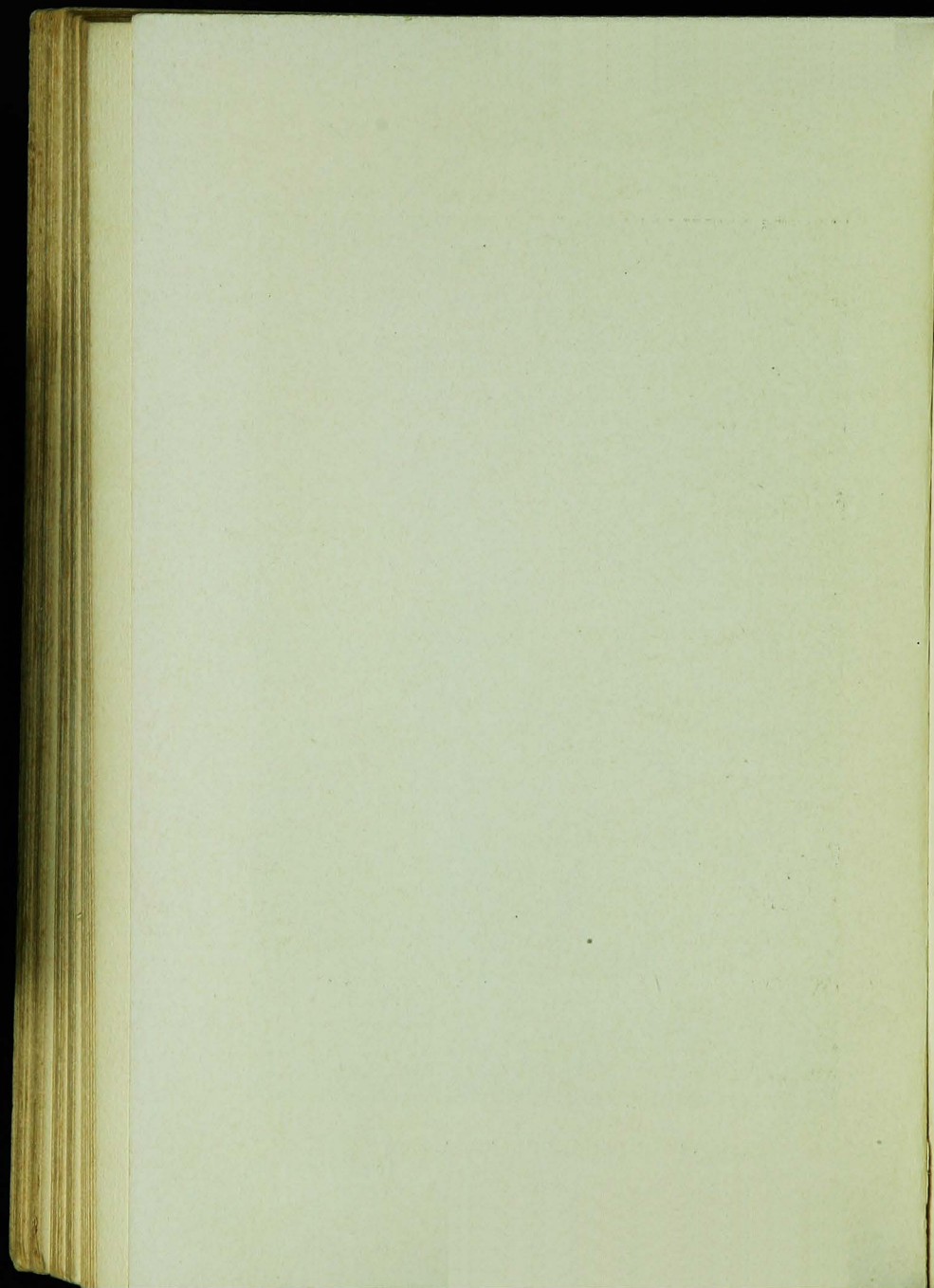
But to say truth, I found particular war aims did not impress themselves strongly on the minds of the rank and file. Most of them, of course, are working men, brought up on the view that all human ills are





OLD FRENCH PEASANT, ALBERT.

[See Page 50.]





due to economics, and will be remedied thereby. This naturally affects their beliefs as to the origin of the war. But there is no doubt in the minds of the men that Prussian militarism, and the moral ideas it stands for, must be defeated, and as a menace to the future of the world removed.

I found very little hatred of the enemy in front. Sometimes, indeed, when conditions were very bad on his side of the line, after a heavy bombardment and a successful attack, I have heard men expressing freely enough a kind of contemptuous sympathy.

Our fellows have an unbounded admiration for the enemy's machine gunners, and a sincere respect for his artillery, but only contempt for his infantry. Their interest in prisoners is rather like that of intelligent children at the Zoo. It is quite a new sensation when the vast impersonal force which stands in one's mind for the enemy, materialises into a number of worried commonplace individuals, and many are the efforts made to make Fritz talk, not for the sake of information, but rather to see what sounds he makes, and to observe the eccentricities of his self-expression. But Fritz is usually fairly sullen and stolid, even when fed in the most approved zoological gardens fashion through the corps' cage.

In the awful hand-to-hand struggle of 4th October, 1917, probably the severest bayonet fighting that the Australians ever had, they captured the colonel of the 4th Prussian Guard. He was officially questioned in the headquarter's dug-out by the Intelligence Officer, and never for a moment forgot that he was a Prussian officer. His demeanour remained stern and dignified; his answers brief and void of information. They saw that he was too well trained and wary to get anything out of, so they dropped the cross-examination, and gave the worn-out prisoner a drink and a smoke. In a little while the two officers, still of course giving away nothing to each other, began dis-

cussing the human side. "I have been a soldier for twenty years," said the German, "and on active service since the war began, but I have wept to-day when I saw the dying of both sides struggling to each other for comfort." The medical officer who told me the story assured me it was so, and that German and Australian crawled together for the end. Even in fighting Germans, there are moments slipped in from out of eternity when our common humanity comes to its own.

Militarism in Australia will never be possible. With all his courage and resource in action, the Australian's ways of thinking are hopelessly unmilitary. It is not easy exactly to explain what I mean. But to take the much-debated question of discipline, he never views it as a matter which is concerned with the welfare and administrative efficiency of the army as a whole. He is quite intelligent enough to see its necessity, but it is always something which cramps his own personal activities. His whole being is in by no means silent, but usually passive rebellion against a system which regards him as a mere unit in a larger whole. "Playing the game" is to him "doing his bit" in the line, shouldering his full sense of responsibility there, obeying promptly and accurately, without being supervised, his orders in letter and spirit, and leading in his turn, if circumstances and his mates demand it of him. But in between times he is apt to be a very troublesome child. As long as he means to turn up in time for the hard work, he can see no moral reason why he should not roam over France or England, A.W.L., if he gets the chance. He will judge for himself such small question as, if there is any real need of coming back to a base camp up to time, how much prospect there is of getting past the sentries, whether the punishment will outweigh the pleasure of the holiday. The proportion of men in the A.I.F. who have not



been A.W.L. at some time or other must be very small. This attitude towards discipline is not confined to the ranks. It has added many grey hairs to the head of any O.C., who aspires to be the father of his officers' mess, and has lost us many good officers.

Towards drill the attitude is the same. If his officers are strong enough to demand good drill of him consistently, they will get the work done as well as it is done in the Guards. But if they are not equal to the demand, the private will not trouble. The Guardsman's pride in doing small things well for their own sake, he knows not. The only job he can be counted on to co-operate willingly in is the fighting of Germans. Let his superiors, in the sweat of their brows and anguish of their souls, keep his feet from straying and his "eyes right" if they can. The British soldier acquiesces in the necessarily ordered life of the army as a temporary and disagreeable necessity; the Australian submits to it only in so far as he has to. Liberty in the Australian army would be far greater if the acceptance of routine discipline was more willing and more general.

But the Australian "democratic" manner (Oh, blessed word!) conveys no disrespect for the individual, only an entire absence of respect for the superior's position. In a fairly quiet part of the line up north, a brigade front was 4,000 yards, and the M.O. of the battalion "in" fixed his aid-post about the centre. This meant a possible carry of about 2,000 yards from the flanks, but it could not be helped. The first morning a bearer lounged up to the M.O. and remarked that he did not think much of his aid-post. The M.O., seeing he was in earnest, asked him where he would put it. "Up behind that hill," said the man, pointing to the right of the line. "Yes," said the doctor, "but what about 'B' company down there?" pointing to the left. "Yes, you're right," said the critic, and, extricating his pipe to salute, he moved off to his work.

Now, some officers would have got into a stew about that, and the man was as innocent as a babe. Of course, the camaraderie business is apt to become an affectation, when it does set one's teeth on edge. But in most cases it is unconscious, and it is always possible to distinguish.

But it does not seem possible to get men to take the wider view, or to change the mental habits of our part of the British race. The inability of many of our men to take the wider outlook was strikingly manifested during the Conscription Referendum. Many men voted "yes" in a fury of indignation with a family of shirkers, who lived in their street; many voted "no" for reasons as purely sentimental. They had their own chance to decide. They would not take it away from others. Despite the list of exemptions many of them thought of brothers and others whom they didn't wish to draw in. Many took the line that they would not compel other men to endure what they had been through themselves; others, that Australia had done enough. Always the personal and local. I never remember any allusion in the arguments which raged in the huts and tents as to the winning of the war, or the influence that 70,000 Australians would have in shortening its duration, relieving the weight of their burdens, and giving them a better chance of getting back. (This was before the Americans came in.) These things were fairly obvious, but they seemed hardly to occur to the men. The desirability of making the Jones in their street "do their bit," or the query, "What use would the cold-footed —— be if they did come?" seemed to settle it one way or the other.

It opened my eyes to the dependence of the future of democracy on education of a different and more eye-opening character than we are giving at present.

But let us guard against insularity. It is the most present danger. No one questions our military record, and we can add nothing to it by the "super-



man'' pose, but only irritate those who have mingled their sacrifices with ours. The English have the opposite fault of belittling their achievements, and sometimes they deceive the world with it—even us. Are we right in assuming that we are ahead of England in everything that matters? Have we anything in practical educational idealism to compare with Fisher's latest bill? Have we nothing to learn from the most recent experiments in the social question, the Whitely report, the industrial parliament, the welfare work of the Munitions Department? Have we nothing to learn in the Church from the passion for reform and the spirit of reality so courageously and finely expressed in the reports of the Archbishop's committees, to take one of many signs? In public health also we are being given a strong lead. Where, in Australia, is there the equivalent for all this? There is more imagination and courage, less chance for the interested obstructionist, a greater readiness to face the need of moral decision and drastic change on a big scale in Britain to-day. People have been much more deeply stirred.

We are, in one sense, a young country, but in another sense, more historically true, we are an ancient political community which has lost its historical memory. Let us remember that humility is the only way to learn anything, and let us not blind ourselves to the lessons of Britain, mourning her three-quarters of a million dead, and sincere in massive resolution that her new day shall be worthy of them. It is well to remember Kipling's line—"The English! Ah! the English don't say anything at all!"

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Lighter Side

There is a famous picture of a man on a raft in mid-ocean, with a black cat as his solitary companion. He is grasping a knife, and eyeing the cat greedily. The legend runs: "If I don't I'll starve, and if I do I'll spoil me bloomin' luck." Most army humour is rather like that—the humour of men "up against it"—hard.

It is regarded, in many journalistic circles, as the correct thing to refer to the Australian army much as one would refer to a favourite and victorious football team—a tendency by none more fiercely resented than by the Australian private. He does not enjoy being called by the pet names his "barrackers" have chosen. I wouldn't take the physical risk of calling an Australian private by any of the commoner terms of endearment adopted by our comic press. War is not to him, as to more fortunately situated writers, something between a joke and an adventure, and he justly and fiercely resents his appalling, monotonous, sad, painful grind being so represented. But war is the conquest of soul over body, and part, perhaps the most precious part, of the fruits of victory, is the saving of one's sense of humour. War is not funny, and the humour of war is a victorious insurrection against the continual oppression of its horrors. Nevertheless, there is a constant spring of humour, and by this the army keeps its sanity. The grimmer the situation, the surer its response. In a



battalion of the Norfolks pushing up the Ancre, the officers went over the top in caps out of bonbons, little girls' sun-bonnets, and such like headgear. There was method in their madness, but surely a wilder and more incongruous effect has never been achieved on life's stage.

Thank God for the lighter side.

The few stories that I have gathered are genuine, and typical of the spirit that makes life liveable under all conditions. I have not seen any of them in print. Some came within my own experiences, some were told me by friends. The censor's bag is a mine of such things, but one must regard everything in it as absolutely sealed, I think. But there was one priceless description of life in the Australian Light:—"Dear ——. We are being well looked after. We have six meals a day—three down and three up." Homer could not have improved on that.

"Life at sea," wrote another sufferer, "is just heaving up and down and being sick."

For the sentimental censor the mail bag means disillusion. His knowledge of the ways of a man with a maid—or some of them—by the time he has worked through ten or twelve thousand letters, will be wider than that of Solomon's, and his confusion even deeper. A man who can write the same letter to fourteen different girls is a pilgrim spirit who has wandered far from his proper era, and his peculiar clime. And for the disillusioned censor there remains, at the end, the bitterest truth of all. There is no such thing as originality in love letters. *Mutatis mutandis*—and the "*mutandis*" is only the name and place of next meeting, all letters between engaged people are interchangeable. It is a depressing thought, for each one of us is sure that his love letters at least were rather beyond the range of the common clayey soul. But it would seem no men's souls are common or clayey

under the given circumstances, so perhaps there is a grain of comfort after all.

But why, in the two great transcendent emotions—love and swearing—should we be doomed to such utter monotony? In modern plays, like "*Cyrano de Bergerac*," and "*Romance*," there does seem a higher standard for the expression of the tender passion, if we could reach it in private life. Chesterton has said that prose is merely the result of our failure to speak in verse.

But for swearing there seems no hope. Our boasted Australian swearing is an absolute "wash-out," and 300,000 men seem compelled to express their cosmic discontent in three unpleasant words. And these become so natural, instinctive, habitual, that the very sense of swearing is lost, and the spirit faced with a really tense situation, such as an insurgent army mule, or an extra "fatigue" becomes as incoherent as an infant crying in the night. The normality of these three expressions is well exemplified in a story which is told of the Archbishop of York when he was on a visit to France. He was questioning a badly wounded Australian about some of his experiences, and getting some very vivid details in return. "Yes, old man," he said, as he left the bedside, "this is a bloody war." "Yes, my Lord," replied the Australian, "it's a fair cow."

I have come across the most desperate expressions in a man's letter to his grandmother.

There is a true story of a Guard's brigadier who found himself situated in a sort of catacomb, in a hillside near Flers, which furnished dug-outs for three brigade headquarters. His room was separated only by a strip of sacking from the office of the brigade clerks of an Australian formation. Becoming tired of the language, the general sent round a polite "chit" to the neighbouring brigadier, and the clerks were ordered to "cut it out." Next time one of them lapsed into a piece of the staff-captain's



biography, his agitated comrade drove his elbow hard to the offender's ribs. "Hush!" he whispered in a tense undertone, distinctly audible the other side of the sacking, "don't you know there's a —— Y.M.C.A. next door?"

There is philosophy as well as poetry in swearing, though it must be admitted that some 99.9 per cent. is sheer monotony. I remember hearing the lance-corporal of the officer's mess of my battalion, an old sailor about 60 years old, blowing up his assistants—lads of about 18, judged too young for the line. "My word!" he said, "I wish I had some of you young blanks in the old sailin' ships. In them days boys was boys, and men was men, but in this —— war (with passionate indignation) boys is men, and men are old ——."

They say that Egypt has not progressed since the days of the Pharaohs. It is quite possible. But the A.I.F. has enriched the language of that ancient civilisation with at least one word—that six-lettered epithet, which even London "Punch" has admitted to be necessary to the successful prosecution of the war. It would seem to have become a more dignified adjective in its Egyptian, than in its Australian setting. An old guide was conducting a party of Australian officers of the first division over the Great Pyramid. He showed them the great tomb of the Pharaohs in its centre, and concluded a truly impressive peroration with an impassioned climax—"And so they brick up the wall, so that for thousands of years no —— fool can tell where the kings are laid."

The Egyptian newsboys knew just the few English words necessary to call the headlines of their papers. Discovering this, the men in the great training camp on the desert carefully coached them. Henceforward the newsboys' cries consisted of very scurrilous comments on the commanding officers. These, delivered in all innocence, in high professional cadence and

peculiar accent, produced a novel, and in one case at least, a catastrophic effect.

It is not always easy to make sure of rank badges. I was walking, or wading, rather, down a road through Flers in the winter of 1916-17. It was desperately cold, and over the rapidly freezing landscape there blew a wind that cut like a razor. My attire was thigh-boots, leather waistcoat, trench-coat and steel hat—nothing obviously clerical there. But, because it is "orders," we must be dressed so that we can be picked out if our services are required. I had chalked, with a censor pencil, a large blue cross on my tin hat. I had forgotten the badge of that society which is to the suffering horses what the Red Cross is to man. When I passed a small working party cutting a drain in the road I heard a man call to his cobber, "Say, Bill, what's that?" "Don't yer know what that is?" said Bill, in tones of ringing contempt for the other's ignorance, "Why, that's a blanky vet."

On another occasion a 6 in. gun went off right under my horse's nose. She rose to the occasion, shot straight into the air, balancing herself on a slippery log, and as I flung my arms around her neck, and drove my heels into her shoulders, from my lofty perch I heard a man remark in contemplative tones, as he vaulted over his spade to get out of the way—"Well, the Church is a marvellous institution." I have often wondered what he meant. Was it my horsemanship he was referring to? I wanted very much to go back and find out, but at the moment circumstances which I could not control prevented me, and my critic, in an hour or two, would have become an indistinguishable unit in the masses of the A.I.F.

We got a certain amount of amusement out of the Guards, who were on our right during the Somme battle. There are no better people to fight alongside of. They cleaned out Contalmaison, where our job



was next door at Pozieres, and we met them later in front of Bapaume. But it is a weakness of this great division to be "different" to other people. Guards will not allow other units to see them dirty, and it is rather a humourously pathetic thing to come upon a Guard's battalion scraping the mud off themselves in solid sheets as soon as they emerge from the saps. Other units would wait till they got back to billets and safety. You feel somehow, when you blunder on a spectacle like this, that it is a somewhat immodest sight—it would be indecent to stop to gaze—and so you avert your eyes and hurry away.

There was the best of feeling, however, between our divisions and theirs. After Pozieres they sent us a message that they were proud to be fighting alongside of us.

Sometimes the humour is a little bit grim, and entirely a matter for the spectator. The first floor of a dug-out (about six feet of earth), was blown in on its two inmates. The rescue party, digging rapidly, soon unearthed one of the men. As soon as they had scraped the mud away from his mouth, his first words were, "I'm all right, I can breathe; for God's sake dig for 'Appy.'" "Appy's" head was underneath his chest, and aided by the instructions of the first man, "Appy" was finally extricated, and artificially resuscitated.

Another rather painful jest of fate befell a driver of our battalion transport. He was kicked in the stomach by a mule, and taken to hospital in great agony. He keenly felt the irony of things when, following the rule in all cases of accident, he was called upon to sign evidence that the injury was not self-inflicted. It was adding insult to injury with a vengeance.

There is much optimism in the army; in fact, we live on it. There were two halves of one dump at Montaubau, which was shelled every day at eleven. They were 100 yards apart, and to the outsider

equally uncomfortable, but the inhabitants of each used to sympathise with the others, and congratulate themselves they were all right.

Ideas of humour vary, of course. I remember an artillery staff thinking it a huge joke, when a town major, whose village was being shelled, rang up for retaliation. They were shelling his village—shelling him, in fact. The gunners seemed to think that he should rather have been thankful that the Huns were engaged in such an innocuous diversion.

I have the following story from the lips of a colonel on the 1st Anzac Corps Staff. During the Hun retreat in 1917 there was keen rivalry between our 2nd and 5th divisions as to who should be the first to get into Bapaume. A patrol of a battalion of the 5th division won, and when this staff-officer came up to the place he found a small picquet of walking wounded men on the British side of Bapaume. "What are you fellows doing here?" he demanded. "Well, you see," was the answer, "we were first in. The other fellows have gone on, but they left us here to see that none of those 2nd divvy fellows get in till the battalion comes up." They had picqueted Bapaume against their own 2nd division.

Very varied are the methods used by the old hands to beat the doctor when they think they have earned a rest. In one instance the bearers laid a man, seemingly unconscious from shell-shock, on the trestles in the aid-post. The doctor briefly examined, and, turning to the bearers, abused them fervently. "What do you mean by bringing this man down?" he said. "Couldn't you see he was dead? Take him up and put him on the bank outside until the morning." Now, outside there was a very heavy strafe on, and shells were ploughing up the neighbourhood. Wondering at the order, the bearers obeyed it, but by the morning the "dead" man had vanished. He had taken the hint and got back to the line.

But the whole essence of army humour is summed



up in the following story from the trenches—in the mud of Gendecourt in the winter of 1916-17. It was a terrible winter, the ground frozen hard most of the time, but during a thaw one of the men was trying to get the mud off his hands in the water at the bottom of the trench. "Pretty 'ot that, Bill," came a protest from his mates, "washing your 'ands in the water we've got to sleep in."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Base Hospital

After aeons of racking, and eternities of waiting, the hospital train pulls into a glare of light. They come and lift you down, and you gasp as the night air strikes you. The first question you ask is where you are, and you rejoice when they tell you Boulogne, for it is near Blighty. Then another roll through the dark, and finally in a dimly lit ward, full of sleeping figures, you are emptied gently on to your bed, the haven where you would be. There is a dim impression of bottles, baths, and the dressings on their little rolling glass counters which are in readiness. Being a stretcher case is an extraordinarily helpless sensation. Whatever you may feel like inside you feel apologetic to the men who are lifting you about. This is a blessed consummation. The hospital train may be sent journeys up side lines, or stuck into sidings, and it's a weary journey gazing at the roof, and wondering how much more. If there's a push on, you may not have the luck to strike a hospital train at all. I have spent twenty-four hours in the rack of a passenger carriage, and after about two have had to stop the sitting cases from smoking—the air got too thick on top. But your present troubles are not quite over. There is yet the bath—a ghastly prospect. No one wants to be clean at that hour. But a slip of a girl, with a V.A.D. apron in front of her, and two orderlies in the background, stands over you, and demands



whether or not you can bathe yourself. Your frantic protests will leave her cold, and you colder. She knows how you feel, but it were as vain to ask for mercy from the Gorgon. In peace time, at this hour of the morning, you would, perhaps, be dancing the last extra with her, or bringing something from the supper room to sustain her drooping energies, back to the nook from whose grateful shadows you can just hear the violins. As things are, she calls you by the number of your cot (O tempora! O inversique mores!) and signs to her minions. You want warmth and sleep, and to be left alone. However, it's no good protesting. They sponge you all over if you aren't well enough to go in the bath, and it's a thing that has to be endured. When it is finished there is no denying you do feel the better for it. Everyone has to have this bath—it is the sure and certain end of the journey. When it is over, you crawl back, feeling that fate's buffetings have ceased, and that she has started to make amends. You are given a hot drink, and then let alone to sleep until about six, when there is another wash and tea, while a whirlwind of cleaning and bed-making rages round your helpless form. Herein is the standing "casus belli" between you and the V.A.D.

The average patient likes to surround himself with a thousand useless treasures, most of them thrown up on his little landing stage by the tide of her own boundless and tireless good nature, but the patient will never part from his treasures, and how is she to keep the ward tidy to meet matron's merciless official stare?

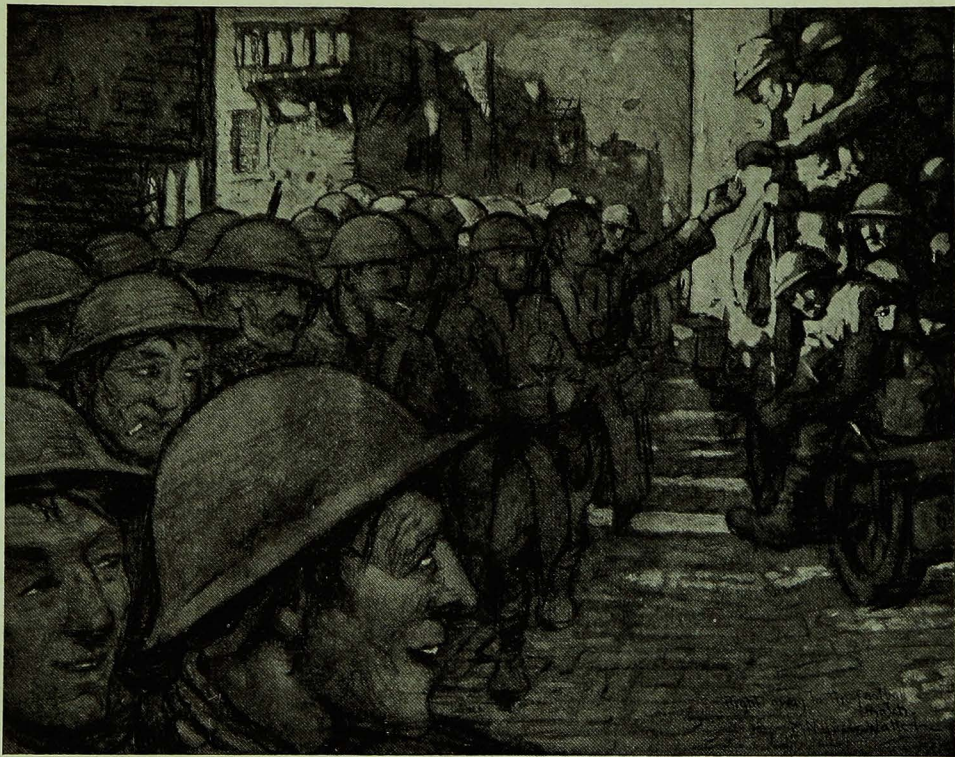
The first few days pass blissfully in sleep. Even the gramophone is almost soothing after the sound of the guns. Later, when you are well enough to read, there are the bookshelves at the end of the ward to explore. About the time you can read you become fully conscious of the gramophone. I personally believe that all people who aid and abet the placing

of gramophones in hospital wards should be sent back to Germany. There are two sides, however, to this eternal question. In every ward there will be found three or four persons with sensitive nerves, and three or four more who are fond of Harry Lauder. My experience is that the Lauder and ragtime enthusiasts work in shifts, and the maximum amount of energy is obtained from the machinery. There's no help for it, human nature being what it is, the fact must be recognised and faced with whatever degree of endurance one can muster.

It is said that the French, as a matter of policy, do not make their hospitals comfortable. They want the men to be glad to get out again. Ours are absolutely splendid, but, by the time we are convalescent, we also are glad to be able to stagger out of earshot of that gramophone. The Scottish comedian is more endurable than the American ragtime, however. To release the very soul, and attain the inner message and vital meaning of this last class of music the record should be much worn, or slightly cracked. Only thus can the full intent of the music be drilled in to the dullest soul.

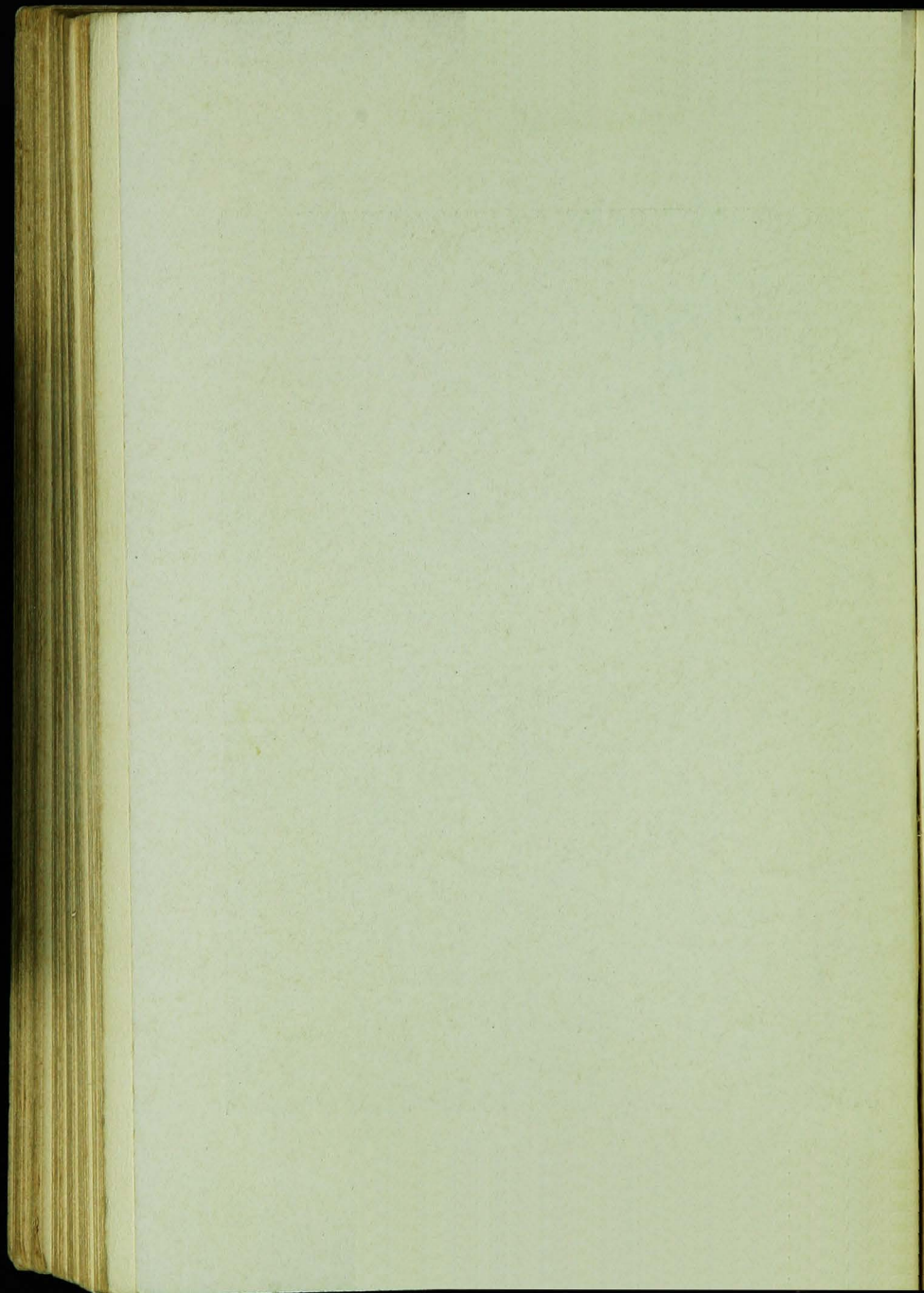
Hospital staffs are usually very hard worked. No man worthy the name, but will fail to lose his heart to the V.A.D.'s. Fortunately for his peace, there will be several. Too much praise and gratitude cannot be given to the splendid work which these girls have done. Most of them have never done any manual labour before the war, and what they have to do here is wearisome and exacting to a degree. The hours are very long, and they are on their feet all the time. The poor girl will be serving tea, perhaps, and at every bed she visits, she will be saddled with requests. "What about that book you promised me, nurse?" "Thought you were going to try to get me chicken to-night, nurse?" "Remember, you promised to begin the washing at the other end of the ward to-morrow, nurse; that's the 19th morning I've





“KEB! KEB! THIS WAY TO THE FOOTBALL MATCH!”

[See Page 56.]





been woken up first." "If sister will let us, can we give you a hand with the knives and the washing up to-morrow, nurse?" And so on. The stripes on their grey sleeves often tell of three or four years' service, which is a big slice out of a girl's life, especially when taken from just that period when girls look forward to having a good time.

Personally, I know the inside of a hospital from two points of view. Hitherto I have written from patients'—let me try to put it from the chaplain's.

His first duty is to get round the wards. This, in a hospital of two thousand beds, is a colossal task. New cases have all to be visited, and most of these new arrivals will want to send home some message—usually a reassuring one—to take the edge of the anxiety from the official tidings. A message from the chaplain carries weight. It is semi-official consolation, and first-hand withal. Alas, that so many of these messages carrying with them all the optimism of love should have to be modified in the sending, for the chaplain will submit these sanguine messages—such parts of them, rather, as contain the patient's estimate of his own case, to the sister or the medical officer of the ward before they go any further. Then he will add a footnote of his own, which also must contain the truth. You meet with cases of men with fingers shot off, and bandaged hands, trying to manipulate a pen among the dressings, "because if I don't write they'll think I'm really bad." There is usually a good deal of private business to see to on the men's behalf, and a lot of enquiries to be answered from the other side of the water. The correspondence of a hospital chaplain is heavy.

The hard, coarse, outer surface, which most men acquire in the line, seems to "peel off" in hospital, and it is easier to get into sympathetic contact with the man beneath. Many men want to talk to you, not so much about their experiences in themselves, as the way in which they find those experiences have

affected them. Their changed outlook often is rather puzzling to themselves, and they struggle to interpret, and find a meaning in the chaos they have been through. It is often a first essay in introspection, but many of them are no shyer with you than they would be with a doctor about their physical ills. To many comes, with somewhat of a shock, the realisation that they, with their weak human wills, have met, and faced and conquered conditions as terrible as any with which life could test men. They have come through it, broken in body, but triumphant in spirit. Upheld by discipline and comradeship, they have conquered the last and greatest enemy of the will—the fear of death. What difference does it make? To some the meaning, or some of the meaning, of war is revealed. It is to them a crusade for righteousness, and their broken bodies are a necessary sacrifice. To others it is all a meaningless tragedy. They see the terrible waste, and nothing more. Some in their sufferings have had dormant religious experiences re-awakened, and felt again the fellowship of Christ, and the sense that underneath them are the everlasting arms. Others find that the long, dreary agony of battle, and the pressure of physical pain shuts out from them a God whom they have always taken for granted. It is for them all a descent into hell, and some hardly seem to come back. Few can talk of what they have gone through in any intelligible way.

The experiences of war will be a permanent mental setting, an abiding standard by which we judge the worth of things material and moral. Whether this will distort or reveal the truth in things that come after I do not know. But in the new background of their minds there is an awakened sense of the life of the spirit, which, aroused in many for the first time, could be made a conscious recognition of the Presence of God. Where there is any religious experience to begin with, war does sharpen and make very



acute this sense of Divine comradeship—summed up in the sentence, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—when the end of the world is an hourly possibility to them. Death to them all is just an incident in life. Its absolute remoteness from the thoughts of the ordinary man is done away with. The barrier of eternity is worn very thin, and almost transparent. Dead comrades are spoken of as if temporarily absent, on other duty. I don’t think I can put clearly this frame of mind; one of the few universals of army psychology. It is what I mean myself when I say I believe in the Communion of Saints.

It was the night work that brought one to close quarters with spiritual realities. I used to do a round between 10 and 12 at night to do what I could for the men who could not sleep. The sisters rather approved it, for they said it quietened the men. This, to me, was a source of tremendous encouragement, for the medical symptom meant a wearied, jaded, tormented spirit given a little rest, maybe through the thought of a Divine Love that does not let go. It is a very common cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” and it always comes from the piercing sense of loneliness in pain. I was sent to relieve that. A few words of conversation, a quiet prayer and blessing, and at the least you leave a restless man in the loneliness of pain with the sense that there is somebody unofficial who cares—the padre, anyway, even if we can’t make real the presence of God.

I usually ended up with a cup of tea with one of the sisters on duty. Hardest of all, this night work. The strain of entering into other men’s battles is very great, and the conflicts fought out in these silent beds are vital and profound. The numbed and half paralysed sensibilities of the line, the first shock and weakness of wounds passes, and with returning pain the spirit awakes. Courage and the will to live

are big factors in some of these long fights for life, and the chaplain is burdened with a sense of responsibility for his share of that struggle.

And then there are the fights which are the last fights of all. One can hardly enter in these moments when the young man's will to live gives place to the sober facing of eternity, and in steadfast confidence, penitence and hope the body fights to a finish. It is all so wonderfully simple to them; they seem to have the message of assurance for you, not you for them. The messages home were sober, simple, strong. Love marked them all. No uncertainty as to what to say; no barriers of illiteracy or incoherence to be broken down. As one whose training has been somewhat academic, I could not help but wonder at the great literature men utter in solemn moments when they simply say what they mean. It would almost be a breach of confidence to quote.

I got, too, an insight into the other side of a nurse's work. What a foolish idea it is that a nurse's training deprives her of her power of sympathy. It certainly does train her to control her feelings, so that they shall not interfere with the work in hand. But with most girls, if they have any capacity for unselfishness (and I really think most nurses adopt their profession from a sense of vocation), I am certain the work trains and develops this very power of sympathy, founding it upon knowledge, and making it more discerning, penetrating and refined. Open sympathy is usually bad for us when we are sick, so the professional mask is maintained; but I know how deep that sympathy can be, and something of the degree to which it can exalt the quality of the work. So with a doctor. But the extra ounce of effort which springs from sympathy in the case of a nurse comes with him also from professional keenness. There is the desire to make a "good job" of a case. So at all hours of the day,



and almost of the night, I would find a certain surgeon in his splint ward adjusting the most wonderfully varied sets of splints of his own contrivance. Men's shattered fingers were separated and strung on a framework shaped like an ancient lyre. Other men's limbs are slung for weeks and months in arrangements of pulleys and shot. And, ceaselessly contriving, the little man goes about his business, altering, adjusting, improving, and with quiet sympathetic humour helping to relieve the deadly monotony of his victims' existence.

There was one man in that ward that for mordant, unconscious humour could not well be surpassed. They amputated his leg one morning, and the same afternoon he sat up and wrote letters. But in the evening he felt the reaction, and was depressed. I said to him, to reassure him, "Buck up, A—; you're doing splendidly. Sister said you are the absolute record, writing letters the same afternoon as your operation." His pride was a little hurt. "All very well," he replied, in all seriousness; "but half these people don't know what it is to get a leg off." It is a reply worthy of wider publicity, for it seems to sum up what is wrong with a good deal in our attitude to the sufferings of war. We, for our own comfort, have confined our attention to the comfortable things, and have persuaded ourselves that wounded are always cheerful, and that war is something between a joke and an adventure.

By taking this vast offering of silent, patient pain for granted, we have lost all grip of its meaning for us. Yet the very soul of sacrifice is revealed in a hospital, far more than on a battlefield. No honest man of any discernment can walk with his eyes open in a hospital ward for a week without realising that, as these have given their bodies to be broken that the state might live, so his own life's energies likewise, as a debt of honour, must be a free-will sacrifice to the service of his country.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### "How the Other Half Lives"

*"With tabs of red upon their breasts  
And even on their undervests."*

—(The Hun Hunters.)

One bitterly cold afternoon, about 4.30, when the light was fading, and the steel blue cold of night was coming down, I was walking, like Agag, on the submerged sleepers of a light-railway line. They were completely covered in mud, but from habit I trod accurately where my accustomed feet knew them to be. The mud was not so deep on the line as in the road. Behind me I heard a motor horn, and, turning, beheld an approaching car throwing up sheets of dark spray. Its wash soused me liberally, but my eyes, before being closed, caught a glimpse of a cap with a red band. A staff-officer, on his way back to Corps Headquarters, some fifteen miles away, for afternoon tea. And I abandoned myself to bitter soliloquy on the staff.

Some months later I found myself on a job which meant spending two or three days every week at Corps Headquarters; and my earlier vague prejudices, shared, I'm afraid, with thousands of others of the "P.B.I.," were modified exceedingly.

I made my first trip back per motor lorry, and at twilight of a very bleak day rolled into a little French village where Corps Headquarters were situated. There is nothing to impress the outsider. No



foam-flecked gallopers arrive with despatches; no gold-laced groups earnestly consult over maps, or brandish field-glasses on the tops of hills. But the "man on business" knows where he is at once. The outward and visible signs are not impressive, but they are unmistakable.

As one progresses up the main street, little, unpretentious notices are fixed to the doors of the ugly, dirty-looking little houses—G.O.C.R.A., D.A.D.M.S., D.A.Q.M.G., Field Cashier (he excels in popularity even "Dados," the universal providence, who, if petitioned in triplicate, will supply everything up to a suite of furniture), and somewhere in the middle of the town he will come to the office of the Camp Commandant, an officer with powers greater than those of any Oriental despot, who is responsible for the entire domestic arrangements of this large and ever-shifting family. For the essence of staff work is that all minor details must go so smoothly that they never obtrude themselves at all.

Outside a house, a little larger than the other, perhaps, there will be a red pennon, and a sentry marching to and fro with bayonet fixed, and this will be the residence of the General Officer Commanding the Army Corps, who may live with his immediate "military family," a secretary and a couple of A.D.C.'s. The work of the foam-flecked galloper is carried on in a mean two-storied building, with a little blue and white pennon over the door.

This is the very centre of the nervous system of the Corps, whereby its bit of the line is linked to the brain of the Commander-in-Chief. Here alone would the casual observer detect, from the outside, any sign of the little village's temporary greatness. And then he would not be impressed unless he were a man whose imagination could go three-quarters of the way towards the facts.

There are 500 signallers (telegraphists and telephonists mainly) attached to Corps Headquarters, so

the volume of business is very great. Nothing is left to chance, under which heading comes the telephone. Orders telephoned are confirmed by wire. The Boche can "tap" our telephone messages up near the line, so all units have a code name, in order that he may profit as little as possible by his scientific eavesdropping. On enquiring once as to whether my former division had part or lot in a stunt that had awakened me, I was told that "Matilda passed a quiet night."

In the ordinary French village there will not be enough houses to go round, and Nissen huts—wooden huts shaped like an inverted U with a floor to them—are erected to make up the deficiency. Stoves and chimneys are installed. Without fires they are unbearably cold, and with them unbearably hot. The question of coal is a duel between you and the Camp Commandant. It usually ends in your living on your batman's wits.

The routine of staff work to an outsider is simplicity itself. The staff assembles for breakfast in two or three large messes at about 8 a.m. This is quite a plain and substantial meal. Last time I had a meal at Corps Headquarters we were without butter, jam, coal. The intense cold, by restricting transport, has deprived us of all "luxuries." After breakfast every man goes to his office, and, unless his business takes him "up the line," he will remain there till lunch time, which is one o'clock. Back again by two, and work again till tea time, which is at 4.30. At one village during the winter we slid on the frozen pond of the chateau to restore circulation before dinner. I discontinued the practice, as I became sensitive to the fact that I was injuring the dignity of the Church. For most work till dinner (7.45), and back in the office after dinner, maybe till 12 or 1 at night. No body of men could work harder, for the simple reason that there are no more



hours in the day in which a man of flesh and blood could work.

Social life at Corps Headquarters is very pleasant. The pressure of work is very heavy, and leaves little time for the amenities of life; but the men have been chosen for their brains, and an active-brained man usually has wide interests. One of our intelligence officers had a delightful talent for translation from French and German into English verse. At mess it is a rule that no "shop" is introduced, so that meals at headquarters are a very pleasant interlude in a life lived in desolation, discomfort and almost unbroken strain. There are often reminiscences of the early days on Gallipoli or in the great retreat. I remember one of our General Staff relating how, during the retreat from Mons, when he had stripped to get at the explosive chamber of a bridge, and laid his fuse, he had to clamber on to the bridge again to head off a stream of leisurely fugitives. The French municipalities could never believe that the Germans were upon them till they saw the Uhlans, and hampered the work of bridge destruction by refusing to part with the plans of their precious structures. All French bridges are built so that they may, by a rightly placed explosive, be easily destroyed.

The man in the street still puts down all mishaps to bad staff work. But staff work is an exact science now. The staff officer, whatever his department, knows exactly what the corps is aiming at, the amount of material (human and otherwise) at his disposal, the amount of transport he can command. He can only get the maximum result from the latent energy at his disposal. It is an infinitely complex proposition, but a logical one, and errors reveal themselves in most cases before battle puts them to the test. It is in the fighting itself that the "fog of war" arises. Smashed communications, messages which never arrive, plans interrupted, maybe dislocated, by the death and wounds of those charged with their execu-

tion, hopelessly broken country, the never quite foreseeable tactics of the enemy, darkness, the variable psychology of men—it is in these incalculable factors that things go wrong. The errors occur, not in the calculations, but in what which cannot be accurately foreseen.

The man who co-ordinates all staff functions is the Chief-of-Staff. The Anzac Chief-of-Staff is Major-General White. General White's extraordinary grasp of detail is the marvel of every brigade and battalion orderly room. I have known myself several instances of his remarkable memory. No detail, especially where the comfort of the men is concerned, is too small for the "Chief." One only fears that the man's quietness and exceeding modesty will prevent us in Australia, in future years, appreciating his extraordinary ability. We have produced many good fighting generals, but this Queenslander is admittedly a soldier of the very first rank. I am simply condensing the verdict of his own staff of sixty hard-working men, and of every unit mess that I have been in. They say that we would have lost him long ago if he had not been tied to the Australian Army.\* With all his ability and the strain of his task, the charm of the man's personality is irresistible. His responsibility is unlimited, for he presides, not over one staff, but co-ordinates them all. The General Staff (operations) sets the pace, "Q" branch supplies, "A" (personnel), and the technical branches (medical, artillery, engineers, signalling) meet their insistent and changing demands.

The Chief-of-Staff's responsibility covers the whole details of the scheme of the General Officer Commanding. The interlocking of all staff work must be absolutely accurate. Aeroplane reports and the locating of new batteries by aerial photographs or

\*Since writing the above General White has gone with General Birdwood as Chief-of-Staff to the 5th Army.



observation of flashes, new saps observed to have been dug, communication trenches, possible points of assembling enemy troops, roads and light-railways, enemy defensive organisations—all these represent so many detailed tasks of destruction allotted to the groups of batteries at his disposal by the Commander Royal Artillery.

Roads must be made, and made rapidly, and old ones kept in going order under such wear and tear as roads have never before been called on to stand. A whole system of waterworks must be laid on, and kept in repair over many miles. This, too, is very vulnerable. The Corps still speaks with wonder of the number of days and hours it took to get the water and light-railways forward at the time of the German retreat. This is the job of the Corps Engineer. And there are smaller branches. There are officers who do nothing but draw maps and get them printed, pay officers, and I was nearly forgetting that very essential man, the Corps Signalling Officer, who is responsible for the whole system of telephone, telegraph and wireless exchanges, and for its maintenance under all conditions which the devil or man can devise. I have known as many as eighty wires carried away by a single shell.

The General Staff, the officers in charge of operations, have their walls decorated with large scale maps, stuck with little flags, and a large baize-covered board is covered with aeroplane photos. of our line and the enemy's. The individual photographs are pieced together like a jig-saw puzzle, so as to unite in one complete picture the two trench systems. The battalions charged with stunts receive copies, and from dummy trenches learn to find their way amongst the intricacies of the enemies' defence system.

The brigadier-generals in charge of departments, work in rooms furnished in the universal pattern—one trestle, table, one chair, one deal telephone desk. I have known a staff officer luxuriously inclined who

sat on a blanket, but the camp commandant did not know or he would have "called up" that blanket.

The corps commander is left as the will which it is the task of all these complex energies to translate into fact. He is fairly accessible in the flesh, if you are on business. You must not dally over breakfast however, but immediately after present yourself at a swift reception he then holds. Departmental heads bring their business then, the issues cut and dried, and recommendations ready. Discussion is cut to a minimum. Then the general usually gets into his car and goes "up the line" visiting and inspecting, calling on brigadier and divisional commanders, engineers in charge of railway construction, or anyone who has vital work in hand. His business is to know everything, and, more important still, everyone, and he is fond of brief informal conversations with officers and men.

The Anzac chief has conquered socially his official barriers. He has built up a personal tie between himself and the Australian soldier. On Sunday mornings, he never missed the opportunity of attending the church parade of some brigade or other, and briefly addressing the men afterwards, probably using the occasion to present decorations. In four nerve-racking years his manner has never lost its geniality and charm. His speech is rapid and decisive, but no man was ever freer from official aloofness. He is back in the office during the afternoon, and, should one be privileged to meet him at tea, his talk will range round many things outside politics or war.

They still tell the story at corps headquarters of the soldier who, when his battalion came out of the line, got a few hours leave on some pretext and presented himself at the door of the general's residence, asking to see "Mr. Birdwood." He saw "Mr. Birdwood," and stated his case. Three of his brothers had fallen in action. He alone was left, and he was worried about the homestead and the old folk. He



had been out since the beginning. Could he go home now? The general listened, gently explained to the man the proper way to apply through his own battalion, and sent him away to do it. But he sent an order through the adjutant-general's department that the man's request was to be granted. The man knew he was asking something unusual, but was confident that "Mr. Birdwood" would understand.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Beginning

"Not many rabbits here, I should think," remarked the sapper who leaned over the rail at my side.

We were gazing at the red and brown cliffs and ravines of Sinai at the head of the Gulf of Suez—the cliffs up which Moses and the Israelites may have scrambled with the sirocco-bound waters at their heels. It struck me at the moment how rabbits would have solved some of the patriarch's food problems.

"No," I agreed, "nothing there for them to chew."

"Although," he went on reflectively, "I've known them to survive some pretty dry spells, too."

I suggested that this dry spell was a matter of some thousand years, and we reluctantly agreed that the evidence was distinctly against rabbits. It would have seemed more homelike, though.

It had been an interesting trip up the Red Sea. We had a head wind to take the sting out of the heat, and as we threaded our way through little jewels of islands, one or two topped with little temples on the summit of their cliffs, just as we used to imagine those which interspersed the wanderings of Aeneas, up to which, with legs swaying from the motion of his little boat, he used to toil to pay his votive offerings. Aden had been hardly more than a suggestion. The low island of Perim, fortified strongly, as we were told, stood off the mainland, but we could see no trace of human occupation. What a contrast to the bold, razor-like edge of Gibraltar, with its challenge to



sky and sea. The low desert cliffs and ravines here seemed to hide behind them the fine story we had heard of great feats of courage and endurance performed in this little theatre of war against the Turk, the sand and the sun.

We were at the end of the Red Sea here at Suez, and the big grey ship slid into a narrow slit of water so small that it was difficult to realise that it was the great highway of Empire, the gateway of the East. We sailed along a well-kept street of Suez, shops on one side, a tree-covered walk on the other, and soon were steaming well into the desert. In those days (early 1916) the canal defences ran about fourteen miles from the canal on the Sinai side, and the men were served with water (about a pint a day for everything), and rations by light-railways running off from the canal. Along the latter base units clustered thick. The groups of white tents showed out against the infinite background of yellow sand. Here were the A.S.C. depôts, and the horse and transport lines. Very soon we were moving slowly through hundreds of floating bodies—very much alive. We eagerly inquired what units they belonged to, and most of us experienced something of a thrill as we heard, one after another, the names of historic British regiments. This was our first introduction to the war zone. Towards evening we came to one body of swimmers, who answered our respectful inquiries with the reply that "they were —— Turks." At once we knew we were among our own folks, and a mighty cheer went up. Then we pushed out into the broad waters of Lake Timsah, and were told that among its clustering trees, so wisely planted by the French, lay the little French town of Ismailia, and General Murray's headquarters. (It is three years ago, Mr. Censor.)

Night on the canal was lovely. Night bombing was not then the popular occupation it now is, and on both sides of us the lights and fires of this thin perpetual city twinkled past. Then at night Port Said,

dimly seen by the flares lit for coaling, where the troops were disembarked into cattle trucks for Tel-el-Kebir. Some of us, who had to report to headquarters at Cairo, had some hours' stroll round the town. It is reputed to be a gay and wicked place, but in daylight Port Said is the nearest approach to a local picture of the "morning after" that I ever hope to see. It is dismal, dirty, worn out, and its saloons and gaming places look drearily shabby and repulsive. There is just enough Europeanisation to rob its weary dirtiness of any Eastern glamour. But we met in the Y.M.C.A. the kindest of English ladies, who had endured exile there with her husband, a Canal official for seventeen years, without losing her graciousness and charm. It was her afternoon "on," and she made us tea, and gave us boiled eggs and bread and jam, charging us fourpence each, if I remember rightly. She talked a good deal of her only son, who had just left his English school to take a commission in an infantry regiment. She had not seen him since he was about fourteen. I made the trial trip of my French accent in a conversation with a French canal official on the journey to Cairo, but, like Mark Twain's "Innocent," I found that, through all my two years' service, all the Frenchmen I met spoke "patois."

The journey finished in the glare of the electrics of the great Cairo station, and scores of gorgeously garbed Arabs flung themselves on us, and our baggage. Alas, that their hotel badges should commercialise their splendour. I have sleepy memories of a furious drive in a "two-horse shay," a polite French hotel clerk, and bed.

It would not be easy for an Australian born and bred, out of Australia for the first time, to describe his first impression of that city of minarets and domes. I remember first looking out of the window and being struck with wonder, and almost admiration, at the sight of a man driving four black-veiled



wives squatting on their haunches on one of those flat little wheeled platforms trundled along by a donkey. They looked orderly enough there. In the well-ordered and beautifully appointed hotel it was not easy to realise that the father of the swarthy Soudanese, who served me with a tiny cup of coffee, died beneath his sacred banners under our fire at Omdurman.

It was on my first morning that I was introduced, unsuspecting and innocent, to "John Collins." I noticed a red-tabbed, sunburnt staff-major pouring ginger beer into a kind of syrup. He raised a drink, tinted like the first faint flush of dawn, to a visage lit like an angry sunset, and I, struck by the exquisite blending of colour tones, asked my Egyptian for "the same as that officer over there." I drank, and felt strangely refreshed.

They took my arrival quite calmly at headquarters, and I had to leave at six, so I hastened back to see about washing, which is done with incredible rapidity in these parts. The chambermaid, an old French woman, who knew no word of English, listed my things, but when she came to a cambric surplice, which I had made to roll up small, and long enough to come to the top of my boots, she was plainly defeated. I didn't know the French for "surplice" (as a matter of fact it's the same word), so left it to her. She considered, then her face lit up, "Ah!" she said, "*chemise de nuit, chemise de nuit.*" I made it plain that I must have them "*à six heures.*" It was impossible. But I entered into explanations. A service on Sunday. "Ah, monsieur! *Etes-vous prêtre?*" "Oui. Je suis prêtre de l'Eglise d'Anglicane." She nearly embraced me. "Ah, m'sieur à cinq heures! à cinq heures!" And sure enough they were there to the minute. Well, I suppose it was her fault she didn't know more about Leo. XIII's Bull re Anglican orders. My French would not have been equal to its exposition, so I quieted my conscience.

I have no wish to add another to the many descriptions of Cairo, and to Kinglake's description of the pyramids and the sphinx. But after an afternoon in which a resplendent and dignified guide had been unrolling the deeds of ancient kings to the vision of the mind, it was fine to send the stately and dignified one careering to the top of the pyramid and back on a bet of five piastres to nothing that he couldn't do it in eight minutes. It was rather like betting a verger of Westminster Abbey to "shin up" the scaffolding. The masterly way in which the guides have adapted the riches of the Australian tongue to their treatment of Egyptian history I have dealt with in another place.

What struck me most forcibly about the interior of the mosques was the way in which things, really magnificent and old, were mingled with tawdry, vulgar, gaudy modern adornments, gifts, some of them, of Napoleon III. There is no sign of discrimination. In the Citadel mosque there is a marvellous and immense carpet, hand-woven by Turkish women. The chandelier is vulgar modern French. In another there are delicate agate lamps of Roman days, containing imitation candles. The University mosque, the most famous of the Mohammedan world, is very strange to our Western notions of organisation and academic dignity. The teacher squats on the floor and his disciples sit round him in circles. The Koran would seem to be the only subject in the curriculum. Promotion is by seniority; after the first year you go up a step on the raised half. It is a strange sight, the ancient professors delivering themselves in a slow sing song tone, the rather inert groups of dark disciples all forming a striking picture against the white pavement. It was here that Napoleon stabled his horses, and the Mohammedans remember.

The most impressive sight I saw in Cairo was a race in the main street between Australian Light Horsemen, mounted on diminutive donkeys. Nor



did they forget, in the heat of the contest, to salute me properly, bringing the whip smartly across.

The journey to Tel-el-Kebir was a swift one, through a brilliantly coloured landscape of intensely cultivated fields. The villages looked somewhat between the guinea-pig hutches at the zoo and a rather disorganised beehive. They were surrounded by a circular wall, and inside this humanity was crammed in tiny dwellings, each of which formed part of the next. The agricultural methods of Moses' day were in full swing, but his excellent sanitary regulations were in abeyance.

Then, in the blinding dust and heat of a May morning we arrived at Tel-el-Kebir. The station was a chaos of soldiers in khaki shorts, helmets and singlets. A fat and courteous little R.T.O. was ensconced in a little hut made of the boughs of trees. A rustic bower on a white desert of platform. Has his supply of limejuice been maintained, or has he pined away ere this? Then through the dust to headquarters, our kits on a little Arab cart, behind us. Headquarters in an old stone Turkish house, very dilapidated. Then up a long, sand thoroughfare, bordered with white stones, which marked the battalion frontiers.

Some of the messes and Y.M.C.A. huts were made like large mia-mias, but everyone slept under canvas. It was desperately hot, and during the worst of the day we would all lie on our backs, the tent flaps lifted, and try to get what hot draught there was over us. The drinks would not keep cool, and the food was ten per cent. sand. In the Light Horse lines it was twenty per cent. sand. Their horses powdered the desert into the finest dust, and half one's bread was used in cleaning one's knife and fork periodically during the meal. Reveillé in camp was at 4.30 a.m. After a mouthful to eat the day's work would commence, by a march out into the desert to drill. Eight-thirty was breakfast, and then

as near to no work as possible (except in the orderly room, which carries on its paper warfare "in saecula saeculorum") was done till 5 p.m. Then more drill. Church parades at 7.30 a.m. on Sundays. I remember, by some mistake, being landed with a parade of about 5,000 men. I had to preach from the top of a pile of sandbags. There was a general present, and colonels were accounted as nothing, but, seeing it was going to be hard to make myself heard I called the parade, general included, to attention, and closed them on me. They moved all right, but I was "strafed" by my O.C.

About 11 a.m. we used to celebrate Holy Communion, and afterwards, in the evenings, we had services in the Y.M.C.A. huts. On Sunday afternoons the men would walk out and inspect Arabi Pasha's old trenches, and, despite orders to the contrary, many scratched into the Egyptian burial mounds for souvenirs.

One of the most impressive services I ever remember being present at was a confirmation we had at Ismailia. There were about eighty soldiers confirmed. The Bishop of Jerusalem officiated, and the whole congregation was military, each chaplain presenting the men of his own unit. The tiny brown church was situated among the brilliant tropical foliage by the sweet water canal, and under the surrounding palm trees the handful of English ladies in Ismailia gave the men tea. "My word, sir," a Gallipoli veteran said to me, "it's good to talk to a real live English lady again."

There is a famous French club at Ismailia, to which nearly every one who could, made pilgrimages to bathe and drink and dine. It was unrivalled for all three, and those dinners at little tables in the open under the velvet Egyptian sky are lovely memories. Headquarters were not far away. My first sight of a headquarters' telephone exchange impressed me by the vast amount of work done in a small space. Most



of the departmental staff-officers lived in "humpies" in the garden.

Here a British regular senior chaplain pinned me inexorably to a training battalion, though I had been posted already to the 4th Division. It was not till they had been in France six weeks that I joined them, missing the first spell in the northern part of the line.

At Ismailia we saw the flat-bottomed, shot-riddled tin barges in which the Turks had made their game attempt to cross the canal.

My last memory of Egypt was the night journey from Cairo to Alexandria to embark. Orders had been uncertain till five o'clock, and it was seven when, heading a long procession of Arab donkey carts carrying our kits, we tumbled into our open cattle trucks, and made ourselves comfortable on our valises. It was then sunset of a terribly hot day, and we had on as few clothes as possible. All night nearly the journey lasted, and it got colder all the time. Occasionally we stopped at a platform, and white, ghostly figures would flit through the darkness, making a constant complaint, "eggs-a-cook! eggs-a-cook!" like frogs suffering from some hopeless, internal malady.

Then we rolled into Alexandria, with its miles of wharves and shipping, and like another great wanderer through the city we cast out anchors from the stern, and hoped for the day. I got an hour's leave at five o'clock, and went into town to forage for breakfast for my companions. In happier days my first thought would have been for Greek and Roman antiquities, and the footsteps of Paul, but on this occasion the order I gave my driver was the Hotel Majestic, where they showed their resentment at being awakened early by their bill. Little time there was to think of Paul, Antony and Cleopatra, Cæsar, the papyri, or anything else. The transport moved out into the harbour amidst a wilderness of

shipping, and next day sailed for Blighty. Through the Grecian archipelago we went (three years ago, Mr. Censor), and, though never convoyed, we were never out of sight of a patrol. Italian sea-planes, French destroyers, British motor boats, made plain to us the wonderful protective power and care of the Motherland. Then the awful majesty and menace of Gibraltar, and, a few days later, with full hearts, we sighted in the bright moonlight the boom and the low black destroyers behind it, with the background of dark cliffs that meant Plymouth—and home.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### Army Theology

The following dialogues are based on recollections of many actual conversations. There are, of course, great numbers of men these days who work at the problems of religion and economics by themselves. These men gain great weight in the interminable arguments and debates in which officers and men must perforce seek distraction from their environment. For men in billets don't talk "shop" much.

#### ARMY THEOLOGY (1).

SCENE.—A bedroom in a French billet. A large French four-post bed covered by a dirty quilt. On the brick floor two officers' valises still rolled. Another Wolsey valise unrolled, and made up with blankets into a bed for the night. One rickety washstand, with tin basin and a mirror that looks just about hanging on its last screw. Officer sprawled on bed smoking, boots and leggings discarded. He is a subaltern of about 21.

Padre (seated on valise): "Beastly row you fellows made going to bed last night."

Subaltern (complacently): "Yes, we had been hitting it up a bit."

Padre: "Yes, and in these infernal places you can hear every word. It must have been about two when you knocked off."

Subaltern: "Sorry, padre. Didn't realise we were keeping you awake. Didn't realise anything very clearly, I'm afraid."

Padre: "No. Your first occasion, wasn't it?"

Subaltern (with some hesitation): "Well, yes, it was. But I'm none the worse to-day."

Padre: "None the worse to-day! What the blazes do you expect? D.T.'s? Look here, old son, cut the damn thing out to start with. (Rapidly.) There's no need for us to argue the point. You've seen as much of it as I have. Decent fellows who've hardly touched the stuff in Australia absolutely going to bits. (Impatiently as subaltern makes as if to interrupt.) Oh, I know all the stock excuses—nerve-strain, fed-upness, nothing else to do, and all that mullock. That would be all right if a man hadn't got a will of his own. You can't get past that."

Subaltern: "Oh, well, what's the odds out here? You get so damned fed up, you don't give a tinker's curse; and it passes the time, and you do forget things for a bit."

Padre: "Yes, old son, but you know where it leads. And it's a rotten example to the men."

Subaltern: "Oh, the men! What do they care? Would it make any difference to them, anyhow?"

Padre: "Not to most of them, old son, but there are plenty of young fellows your own age, and a bit less, who are putting up a stiff fight, and the moral example of an officer whom they like (and you're pretty popular) goes further than you think. Look here! The moral influence of a man with guts in the army is enormous; whether it's going over the top, or keeping off the booze. You know that as well as I do. You've got a pretty decent start with the battalion, and ought to have a good future with the brigade."

Subaltern (sneering): "Future! (Gravely) Padre, you know the stunt J—— and I are down for on Wednesday night?"



Padre: "Well, I did hear a hint of it, and we'll know however things go that everything humanly possible has been done."

Subaltern: "Thanks, old man. There's one or two things I want you to see about for me, but I'll come in again."

Padre: "Right. But look here (in an awkward rush), why look at things as if the world was going to end on Wednesday night or any other time?"

Subaltern: "Oh, I know what you're driving at, padre; and at home I used to go to church and all that, but this bally war seems to have knocked it all out of me. How can you believe in a God of love and all that sort of thing? Look at poor old S—— for instance, lying out there on their wire for this last week (with a break in his voice), the whitest man that ever lived; and there's G——, who's a lead-swing'er'll probably get the company, and we'll do the work."

Padre (quietly): "I don't believe S—— is out there on their wire. I believe that S—— has left out there his body, and the pain, and weariness, and temptations that you and I have got to stick, perhaps the sins of the body, too, and is doing God's own work somewhere else. I think that he is 'carry-ing on' in God's own way; and we who know S—— believe that God will have the work for him to do that he's worthy of."

Subaltern: "Well, padre, it seems with me a matter of moods. Sometimes I can't help feeling as you say. It would be a mad world, anyway, if it weren't so; and then something (oh, nothing out of the way as things go out here) happens, and I can't see anything except mud and blood and horror. How can God let it go on?"

Padre: "You must keep it out of your eyes, old chap. Don't you believe in a God to Whom every man matters supremely? One Who knows what we

are going through, because He has been all through it Himself. One Who is bearing all the pain of the world, and Who is going on working for us and being crucified, and rising again in our hearts and motives?"

Subaltern: "Well, yes, at bottom I think I do still. But you feel so fed up that there's no room for anything else, and life seems a rotten business all round."

Padre: "Eli. Eli, lama sabacthani!" "Christ follows you even there, old son."

Subaltern: "But, padre, when you think of it, how could God have willed all this? Those letters I got out of the pocket of that Hun officer last raid—I shot him just as he was going to shy a bomb at me—he must have been an awfully decent chap—religious fellow, too. The Intelligence man read them to me when I gave them in. He was thanking them for a watch they'd sent him for his twenty-first birthday—must send it back some day. And parsons at home say God arranged the war."

Padre: "'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' No, I don't think any of us say that. The whole life of Christ, which means to me all of God I'll ever be able to realise, seems to teach that God limited His power when He made men free. There's no freedom to do right without a freedom to do wrong. He works by appealing to free men. His whole life was an appeal for the absolutely free loyalty and love of people like you and me. He showed them what it might cost—there was no making things attractive and easy. God didn't make us to cling to Him like a limpet to a rock. But He left us with the vision of what men could be if they accepted, of their own choice, His love and comradeship and guidance, and He gave us an ideal to work for, and His constant help. But I think He left the decision to us. We've got to take the responsibility. I'm sure God limited His own power when He made us free. Oh,



I know there's lots to qualify our freedom; I've done a good bit of psychology, and it's true we all act and think in bunches, even when we imagine we are being jolly independent; yet, if we take God's way, consistently and practically, there's Brotherhood, Justice, and Peace. If we don't, we've got to take the consequences, and we're doing it now. If other people don't, we've got to take the consequences of their acts, to fight for those ideals, to keep them alive among men. Not peace, but a sword. Where good the evil meet, inside us or outside, there must and should be war. This eternal fight against sin inside and out to realise our ideals, is what old James calls 'the moral equivalent for war.' Isn't it all part of this show, too? Isn't the war almost the first time Christian principles have been applied to international relations? You and I have got to bear the cost. Yes, I've lost my brothers. It marks a new development of Christian morality which fights outwards slowly, and terribly painfully."

Subaltern: "You think God didn't will the war, then?"

Padre (continues): "I don't believe God arranged the war, but I believe Christianity (what was left of it) caused it. The self-respect of man, his spiritual values of honour, pity for the weak, and other motives, may be mixed up, but I don't think they'd have been strong enough to make men enlist as they did. I'm a broken reed, old chap, as far as that goes. If we could see things as they stretch out into eternity. The pain hides it from us as it hid it from Jesus. No, for myself, I don't believe God made the war in that it must have happened. I think that, according to His laws, it is the natural result of refusing His guidance and His love, and going in for money and power alone. But His hand is stretched out to us still, as nations and individuals. But one-sided, unrecognised love of God or man, love in a world of sin, is agony. It's sacrifice. It may

create an answering love, till then it's agony. There is no practical way of escape from His way in the end, I think. But we can, in politics and business, do each other terrible damage getting there. Meanwhile we must share the Cross and prove it's God's." (Getting up.) "Well, old son, I must go and try to explain to a poor devil of a bridegroom who thought he had sixty pounds in his pay-book that he's only six bob. You'll be round again then about that other business." (Going out and noticing photo.) "That the best girl?" (Subaltern nods.) "Fine face. Good-night."

Subaltern: "Good-night, padre; thanks."

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#### ARMY THEOLOGY (2).

SCENE.—A rest camp behind the lines in the Ypres salient. Rows of tents in foreground. A few small square Armstrong huts-right. These are offices, and company officers' messes. In the background, by the roadside, from a small gallows-like structure, hangs a shell case, by which stands a sentry with a stout stick in his hand. This is the gas alarm.

TIME.—Late summer. The evening of a warm day.

A group of men, in all stages of undress, lounge on the grass. Some of these are stripped to the waist and are leisurely "chatting" in their singlets. All are smoking. A young padre occupies the seat of honour—an upturned bucket—and, with the light of battle in his eye, puffs rapidly at a cigarette.

1st Soldier (an aggressive looking individual with red hair, "chatting" his shirt with an expression of concentrated ferocity): "But do you think after the war people will go to church any more?"

Padre (reflectively, and mainly to himself): "Well, I don't know. War conditions won't help them, if



there's going to be fierce scrapping for what's going in a world where everybody's got to go short for awhile. But church-going's only one indication of the way Christianity works. In philosophy we had got beyond the individualism and materialism of forty years ago, and the war has exploded them forever for the man in the street. Men have died willingly for a cause—to give the world a new start. Whether the Church will be able to concentrate all the vague idealism in the war, concentrate and focus it all under the fighting idea of the Kingdom of God, is another thing. Churchmanship will need to mean hard fighting, practical idealism, which doesn't count the cost—the Church will lead or be left for a great while—God only knows."

2nd Soldier (a tall, languid individual with an educated voice): "But don't you think, padre, the day of churches is over—religion has become a matter for the individual?"

Padre (rapidly): "No. I think that as long as men believe in ideas, and try to get them carried out, there will be creeds, and churches, and parties. We can do it all in a broader, humbler spirit, no doubt. We're in an age of criticism. It's second nature for men to criticise everything, and we're pretty shy of believing in anything which doesn't happen to us personally and regularly, like meal-times. It's specially hard for us poor beggars who are so everlastingly up against the horrible and sordid side of things. When you've got to kill Germans so many days a month, and daily seeing death to the beauty of life and the precious and holy things in it; well, they're hard to keep a grip of. But I am sure that our beliefs, if we ever knew them, will come back, purified as by fire. It's 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' now. Some day it will be 'It is finished.' It has been carried right through to the end."

2nd Soldier: "So you think the world'll be a better place to live in afterwards?"

Padre: "God knows. The strong man will be stronger. Faith, which can live now, will be purified and strengthened. It will stand up to anything. Better able to do its work in the coming time. Able to comfort and lead other men."

2nd Soldier: "Do you think it will make men more inclined to accept the teachings of the Church?"

Padre: "Surely men must wake up to the meaning of the Cross. The whole future is bought with it, God and man in sacrifice, service, brotherhood; those are principles of the Church; we can see them even here. And they must light up this awful existence of ours (it doesn't do to talk like this in the middle of it, though), to think that the Cross doesn't end anywhere, but that God is suffering and sympathising with us, bearing our pain and leading us through it Himself."

1st Soldier: "You never answered my question about going to church."

Padre: "Well, I can't, to tell the truth. We offer you a belief in a living, loving, suffering, fighting God, who calls us to fight alongside Him, to whom we each matter, Who helps us but leaves us free. He is calling upon us more clearly and definitely now for that free love and service than ever before. Are men going to listen? It will be harder for the people at home to listen after the war, for the fact of sacrifice won't be so present to their minds. They needn't remember what we've been through unless they like."

1st Soldier: "But won't you give me a straight answer to my question about 'going to church'?"

Padre: "Yes. I don't know. I can't talk about that by itself. I've got to go back to first principles. Will men wake up to the call of Christ? Will the Church lead the new idealism, and inspire men to find real ways of making the world better? Will



she give up the idea of religion being a private matter or a separate department of life? And will she use her common sense and wake up to the need for services and sermons that you fellows, who can't or never learnt to find your places, can follow? It's all a part of the same thing."

2nd Soldier: "But don't you think men are thinking for themselves these days?"

Padre: "I wish they would. I doubt if even army life disturbs men's old ideas much. It seems to numb our thinking and feeling. Dopes men rather. Yet there's an awful lot in that question of yours. There's an all-round hankering for intellectual adventure, for originality, and men have got the idea that they're tied to certain things in the Church, and have to go outside it to be free. Our bad teaching methods are the trouble. It's not Christianity. What happens to them when they do go outside mostly? Sometimes it ends in vague and casual destructiveness—sometimes in a man selecting one or two bits of orthodoxy, according to his temperament, and saying that it's enough. But we should ram it into our people that it is the duty of every Christian to think for himself. To do that he needn't cut himself off from all the experience of the ages, preserved in its variety in the life of an historic church and the answers other greater men have given to the same questions which worry him. The great aim of adventure is discovery, and faith is the door of that. A great discoverer is a man who has great faith in what he sets out to find. Look at the Elizabethan seamen. Faith—"the proving of things not seen." The exploration and discovery of the faith—it's been the task of many great men. I've been reading philosophy for ten years, and I still feel I'm at the beginning of exploring the Apostles' Creed. New meanings flash out. Life, and all the experiences one goes through, seem often to make bits of it suddenly real, to show us just what they mean,

and where they lead. Think for yourself! Why, from Paul to Temple, what else have we been doing? How can you be a Christian and play the game without? Christianity isn't a rather depressing habit. It's a life lived in big attempts. Orthodoxy took a long while to put together; we've got to keep criticising to understand it, and it grows all the time. But there's a lot of wisdom in it. Men state their discoveries in their own way. The beliefs of old times sometimes look rather different when we've finished with them, but they contain the same experience."

2nd Soldier: "What about science, then?"

Padre: "Well, doesn't what I was saying about faith apply? Look at the patient years of Darwin—the end in view all the time. And the Abbé Mendel—and Pasteur—the last two Christians. We take a great idea and explore the world with it, and come back with it as truth. How else can a man think for himself?"

2nd Soldier: "Now you're getting a bit beyond me. But I've always reckoned that a man who thinks for himself can't swallow miracles at any price. There science hits you."

Padre: "Well, does it? The facts of our Lord's life, and the Christian Church, take a lot of accounting for. A little group of men recruited from the working class overturning an ancient religion, strong in its art and tradition, and giving the world a new start. The life and character of Jesus couldn't have been invented by such a crowd of utterly different men, and the different pictures are all of the same man. For one hundred and fifty years they've been trying to cut the miracles out, but no two critics have ever succeeded in agreeing about the scissors and paste. They're a part of the records. Miracles are outside our human experience—that's all science can say. And we say that the intervention of God in human history is beyond the ordinary course of human



experience. You can't say that because it doesn't happen every day, it is forever impossible. Science could never say that. Science doesn't make laws about what God can't do. And we believe in a God of love Who is trying to work with us men, and who, by a freewill act, did reveal to us in Christ the way to get into touch with Him. No, there's nothing to compel you to believe this; but there's nothing impossible to believe in it."

2nd Soldier: "Still, padre, things have been changing. It's hard now to know what to believe in exactly. Aren't there plenty of people who believe that Christ was divine and came from God and is living now, who don't believe in miracles? It's the clergy who are leaving us laymen behind these days, and we don't know where we are."

Padre: "Yes, you're right. But it seems to me that the modernists—there's a whole school of them among the clergy—are up against a harder problem than we who hold to the old faith. But moral philosophy and psychology and higher-criticism are making us restate the old faith. And the casualties in this business of reconstruction are heavy."

1st Soldier: "How would you define the essentials then?"

Padre: "Belief in God, Who, so far as we are concerned, is what Christ's life represented Him. Belief that in the facts of Christ's life we see through to the character of God, all of it that we can understand. All our reconstruction is to preserve the power and vitality of that for our modern lives."

2nd Soldier: "But why don't you let people know what you're doing?"

Padre: "Well, we do in books. But, in the pulpit, we're too frightened of offending the conservative folk. One doesn't like to preach new stuff until it is well tested. It is hard to shake up old people, you know. I'm not excusing it. But we're not so fond of defining things finally these days.

Definitions are like the eternal verities of science. We are always wanting to change them for better ones to meet the facts. And the Thirty-nine Articles are pretty elastic, though I'm afraid they do want re-writing rather badly. But there would be the deuce of a row. No! modern theology works more by suggestion, than on hard and fast lines. The work of present day men is astonishingly practical, and very simple. But I suppose it will take twenty years before Figgis, Inge, Temple, Forsyth and the rest filter down to the man-in-the-street."

2nd Soldier: "Well, there's the bugle, and I'm mess orderly this week." To 1st Soldier: "Come on, Red, get your waterproof sheet; we'll have it out here."

1st Soldier: "Yes, and the boys will go off at us a treat for forgetting to lay the table."

Padre: "Well, for the present."

Both: "So long, sir."

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### ARMY THEOLOGY.—III.

A cobbled road in Belgium. The men are marching back from the line. A padre carrying only a heavy stick marches along beside an infantry four in earnest conversation with one of the men. The brigadier and his staff trot past. One of the men growls something about "his not havin' to worry about a ——— pack."

Padre: "Rot, man! You wouldn't swop with him. He didn't get to bed last night. And I happen to know he did his best to get transport for your kits. Here, give us your gun a minute. I'll risk the Hague Convention."

1st Soldier (who is in private life secretary of a branch of his union): "Well, no one has ever ex-



plained to me why it is that the clergy have always been on the side of the top dog."

Padre: "Well, that statement isn't true historically and I won't take it personally. We freed the serfs, started your hospitals, began popular education for the children of the working man, gave a career to boys who'd never otherwise have done more than keep-pigs. At the beginning of the Christian era women weren't what you'd call top dogs; but look at them to-day."

2nd Soldier: "Oh, I bet they always got their own way pretty well."

1st Soldier: "Well, you can't deny the clergy are on the side of the capitalist to-day."

Padre: "You mean, I suppose, by that that they don't preach sermons against capitalism. Well, as far as my acquaintances go, most of the younger clergy in my church, Church of England, are socialists. And several of our Australian Bishops; English ones, too, for that matter. Even Bernard Shaw, who doesn't love us, admits in the preface to 'John Bull's Other Island' the notable part that the High Church clergy have taken in forwarding the socialist movement. But it's hardly possible to preach economics. Your own ideas seem self-evident enough to you, so do mine to me; but the whole subject is tremendously complex, and the fashions of beliefs in economics are always changing, as you know. You used to be keen on socialism, now it's syndicalism; to-morrow it's going to be guild socialism; heaven knows what the day after."

1st Soldier: "Yes, that's true; still, you haven't done much for the working man."

Padre: "No, we haven't lately. But you haven't given us much of a chance. You've cleared out, and left us. The middle class are the ones that go to church these days. If you fellows gave us your support we'd be much freer to act against what is obviously wrong in our social system. But a Church

which has to depend, partly through your own fault, on certain classes of the community can't do the hitting it ought to do. Besides, as I said before, there are honest and able people on both sides, and when one starts preaching economics or politics one is on very uncertain ground."

1st Soldier: "Still a man ought to have the courage of his opinions."

Padre: "Yes, but the pulpit is a place of authority. You are responsible for what you say to God and man. So are you anywhere, for that matter. You don't go there to air your own opinions so much as to preach the Gospel committed to you as a trust. Surely, man, whenever we preach that, we preach against all selfish hoarding of money at other people's expense, against scoring off other men's economic weakness, against selfishness in every walk of life. We are putting before men the motives of sacrifice and service, and teaching that all work, in God's will, is the service of the community. We are preaching that we are 'members one of another,' God's children, brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of God. And those of our hearers who are Christian are the ones who fearlessly apply these principles, and follow them out in their own lives and political theories. What more could we do?"

1st Soldier: "Yes, that's all right. Practical Christianity is what's wanted. But the Church hasn't shown much sympathy with the working man in his struggles in the last thirty or forty years. Without going in for theories, it's your business to point out the damage to human life that unrestricted competition can do."

Padre: "Now I think you are mainly right."

1st Soldier: "Don't you teach now that it's a sin for any of the working class to try and get on in the world? Isn't there something about being content with the station in life unto which it has pleased God to call you?"



Padre: "I don't think there's anything in that charge. The station to which it has pleased God to call you is the job you've got the brains and the energy to do."

2nd Soldier: "What has the Church done to get the working man a square deal against capitalism?"

Padre: "Well, old chap, you've got me up against it there. There's plenty of excuse, but that's not much of a substitute for acts. We've funk'd it in the past. (Reflectively.) I'm inclined to think that it's the first big job we have funk'd. I don't know that individuals are to blame exactly. The causes lie a long way back. Our religion, after the Reformation, got too individual a matter. Too much a matter of saving our own souls. But in recent years I'm inclined to believe that the fault lies mainly in the rotten economic theories which have dominated the minds of the best of men. It's partial morality that we're slowly getting recovery from. You know the Church is, after all, made up of ordinary people, and a theory, once it gets accepted, is hard to shift. Take, for instance, the question of wages. Men like John Stuart Mill and Bright, great men who really did love their fellow-man, believed it was not possible for the State to interfere in fixing a living wage, or for workmen to combine to put it up. Supply and demand were to do everything. You know we're only just working off the effects of that theory of supply and demand as applied to human life."

A Young Sergeant (joining in): "What effect do you consider the work of Kingsley and Maurice had upon the evolution of the social question?"

Padre (with a quick glance of interest at the new-comer): "A good deal, mainly indirect. It was the first modern systematic attempt to review the whole of the industrial facts definitely from the point of view of the Kingdom of God. (Turning to original adversary.) After all, you know, a lot of the spade-

work has been done by men who were devoted Churchmen—look at Shaftesbury's Factory Acts."

1st Soldier: "Yes, but what are you doing now?"

Padre: "Well, it's not easy to answer; but we're waking up. The agitating stage is over, I think, and our job will be to help in putting some more constructive motive in place of class war. After all our business is with first principles. If we can get people to work on those, however keen their disagreements, the ideals will come into the social question. You see, when you look at it from the point of view of a student, and not a party politician, things are terribly complex. I don't believe for a moment anything simple will meet the facts. Truth is nearly always complex when you come to put it into facts. Still you've got a case. We will have to make it clear that religion is not a sedative to make people contented, but a positive force to smash everything that stands in the way of society being worked on the principles of justice and brotherhood, and to create these things in human life. Ideals seem to me the only practical way out of the present situation. We'll have to come down much harder on first principles—we're the trustees of first principles—and insist that Christianity has got to be tried as the basis of our social, commercial and political life. It's a pretty drastic expedient, but I'm hanged if I can see any other way to get the old world going again that will be worthy of all this. (Waving his arm towards the guns.) Justice and brotherhood—you can't build on bitter memories of class war. Justification of the Church depends on the future courage, wisdom and charity of her members in the redemption of society—every fault in Church and State an extra call to the loyal action of its members.

1st Soldier (sneering): "We're not going to be put off with religion which aims to keep the working man quiet."

Padre: "Haven't I been saying that religion is



not a sedative. A live religion has never kept people quiet yet. It's effect has been pretty irritating at times, stirring men to get things done. Sometimes it has made people smash things, often to build them. Not all the goodwill in the world can do without sound economic theories; but my point is that mutual and sincere goodwill is necessary to hammer these out. If Christianity ever should be tried as the basis of a new social order, it'll smash everything that stands in the way of society being based on justice and brotherhood, and set us on a path of perpetual experiment, set free the divine discontent. It's a question we'll never be finished with. I don't know if you remember the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel—"I will not let thee go until thou bless me." So with the social problem—but, please God, we'll do our milling in a decent sportsmanlike spirit. There'll be just as much disagreement probably, but we'll know we're all in the same boat and working at something we have in common." (After this heated outburst padre wipes his fevered brow, and pauses for breath.) "Don't see how the present party situation's going to give us that. Two groups, mental and manual labour; two class consciousnesses—class consciousness is a hopelessly irrational frame of mind, into which nothing can penetrate. No reason can pierce it. You throw at each other jagged pieces of facts, never the whole facts."

Soldier (persistent and aggressive): "Yes, but what are you *doing* about it now?"

Padre (thoughtfully): "Well, to take the Bishops. An Australian judge, who ought to know, told me he considered Gore, the present Bishop of Oxford, to have a better grasp of the principles of capital and labour than any man in the Empire; Watts Ditchfield, the present Bishop of Chelmsford, was a jolly good agitator when he was in the East End. He got up sweating exhibitions which caused the deuce of a row. Archbishop of York is presiding over big

conferences of employers and employed in the North, and plenty of the prominent men are keen churchmen. In Australia, Donaldson of Brisbane, Stephen of Tasmania, and Long of Bathurst, Davies of Moore College, Sydney, the Dean of Newcastle, and others all know what they're talking about on the subject. We've been holding many conferences. You've got to do a lot of talking before you can get common bases for action. And when it comes to the point our only action can be influence. You're quite wrong in supposing that there's no interest. It's the liveliest subject among us. All theological students make a start on it, and, as I said before, most of the younger clergy are socialists."

Soldier: "Do you really mean that?"

Padre: "I do. You are foolish in cutting yourselves from us. And, furthermore, the most powerful body, because they hold the balance, in Australia, I think, are the people who have ideals, and who are looking for the best in the parties. I'm sure that in the future you will need to appeal to the moral common sense of the community rather than to the notion of class war." (There is the sound of a bugle.) "Ah! that's the end of the journey." (Wiping the perspiration from his brow.) (Sotto voce.) "Thank goodness!" The bugle sounds "Officers." The line halts, and the men lean against a bank at the side of the road. Company commanders lead their men off by companies to their huts.

Sergeant (as the padre marches off with his company): "What's that in Masefield, padre, about the trained mind outing the upright soul?"

Padre (laughing) "You swab! What was your school?"

Sergeant: "—, Sydney."

Padre: "I was at —, Melbourne. Doing anything about 7.30?"

Sergeant: "No."



Padre: "Call for me about then, Room No. 7, and we'll go for a stroll. I've managed to keep a book or two in by kit you might care to borrow. Means a row with the Q.M. every move; but it's worth it, and I think I've broken his heart at last."

Sergeant: "Books! By Jove! thanks very much."

Padre: "That's all right. So long for the present."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### Bill and "Red" Go to Church

It was the second Sunday after their discharge. Both men were from far back in the sheep country. Their womenkind had gone with the kids to the beach, but the men had stayed behind. "Red" had fished out a card from a pocket-book in the last stages of collapse, and they had decided to look up the old padre again at his suburban church.

He had been a jolly good sort. He'd stuck to the battalion for nearly two years, always with them in trouble. Last time they had heard him was a wet cold day when they were back in rest billets, and he stood on a biscuit box and strafed them a treat. The end part was different from the rest they remembered. He said God had come right into human life—their lives, to help them. That was partly why they were there. "A bloke would never have come through," said Bill to "Red," "unless it was meant somehow." Now in their own ways they had made up their minds to try to find out why it had been meant. So they looked up the padre in his peace time habitation, smiling to each other as they thought of his strafes, and wondering how a crowd of "civvies" would take it.

They found the place. They stood for a moment irresolute in the porch, and then made a break for a seat at the back, behind a pillar. They hadn't noticed the ticket on the seat. It so happened that it belonged to a rather important personage; so pre-



sently there stalked up to them in a business-like way a frock-coated person with a "bow window." He looked very serious. "Red" saw him coming, and wriggled nervously as he made for them; but Bill was quite surprised when he realised the newcomer was making for them. He wanted them to move! In front of all the crowd! They'd pinched someone else's seat! ——!! ——!! Hot and scared the guilty ones were moved nearer the front. "Oo's the bloke, Bill?" said "Red" in an indignant whisper. "Oh! one of their —— mother's pets, I suppose," grunted his companion. "They're the same wherever you strike them; always butting in!" (Now a mother's pet is a term of endearment used in the army to denote a military policeman.)

There came a distant long-drawn-out groan. A door opened and the choir trooped in. Bill drove his elbow into "Red's" ribs as the padre emerged. He had filled out a bit. The organ gave one squeak and the service began. The words were familiar, but why was he talking like that? It was all on up high, and on the level like. "Red" flashed the question with his eyes. "His voice was always going crook," reminded Bill with some misgivings as to the soundness of his excuse. Some of the meaning of the early part of the service had come home to the men, and they felt at home with the familiar words. The confession, the absolution, the Lord's Prayer, followed in quick succession, then some separate sentences they hadn't heard before; but the people knew the answers, so it was all right. Then they suddenly realised everyone was standing and hastily scrambled to their feet, making enough noise, it seemed to them, for a platoon taking off its equipment. They couldn't find the place and stood passive, as did everyone else, during the psalms. They caught isolated phrases. Someone was promising to give someone else all the trouble he wanted—that much was clear. "Who's the bloke?" again asked the enquiring "Red," but the

elder man shook his head. The lessons were rather interesting, but the second one was a bit twisted. They had been used to hearing these out of a version in modern speech. They didn't make much out of the canticles. They were getting a bid fed up with the singing.

Soon the padre came down from his seat. He seemed to be coming towards them, and they grew hot and cold all over for fear he would recognise them there. But he stopped and knelt in the middle. Then he began again. They jumped as they recognised his well-known voice. Strong and clear and resonant, carrying sincerity and conviction, it rang out surely in the great words of the Litany. Though they might miss a word or two here and there, there was no mistaking the meaning now. Better than anyone else there they caught the meaning of some of these petitions. "That it may please Thee to succour all that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children, and to shew Thy pity upon all prisoners and captives." Bill was thinking of his wife, and his anxiety, and a cable which was late. It had been all right, thank God. "Red" was thinking of a younger brother, badly wounded by a bomb in a night attack on Mouquet Farm, and picked up by the enemy. "By Thine agony and bloody sweat"—so He knew all about it too. But the Litany ended and the rest of the service proceeded on "C." It was getting longish, they felt. Time they left, but they would wait and hear the sermon.

At length the padre—their own—their Battalion padre—got into the pulpit. They sat back and waited eagerly for the real business of the day. They looked round with expectation, and Bill almost winked at his mate as he reflected on what was in store for the unsuspecting and respectable crowd of people. But the blow missed fire. The padre started in a voice they knew not—high and sing-song, and



though sometimes they caught a far-off echo of thunder he didn't seem to get on the spot—not as far as they could judge. He spoke of the "world being too much with them" and of "lack of spiritual insight," whatever that might be. True he seemed to strike form at the end. The words came in sharp staccato sentences in the tones they knew well.

They went round to the "stage door" afterwards and marched into the vestry. The parson's face lit up at the sight of the old battalion colours. "By jove, boys, I am glad to see you. It was jolly decent of you to come out. Come in to lunch —. That's all right; we can ring up your folk at the hotel."

"How did you like it, boys?" asked the padre a little anxiously.

"Well, that last bit coming up the straight was all right," said honest Bill.

"The lady's handkerchief next to me made me reach for my gas mask," said the honest "Red."

As they left soon after dinner Bill remarked. "Well, he's a white man, all right, but——," the words came with difficulty, for he was very loyal—"don't you think these folk (jerking his thumb back) "have got him bluffed? 'Strewth, I'd like to git him, back on to the old ration box," he added dreamily, "and listen to him wording the boys again. Do you remember that time when we came out of Geudecourt ——"

At the vicarage in the back garden the cleric, a far away look in his eyes, was striding impatiently up and down, absently slaughtering a bed of violets with a large and heavy leather-headed stick. His wife watched him from the back verandah with a smile tinged with anxiety. There came a ring at the door. "Ah, Miss Jones. I'm afraid my husband cannot see you at the moment. He is busy preparing a sermon."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Quest for Religion in the Army

*"It is not necessary to make men religious; what is necessary is to prove to them that they are religious."*—Tyrrell.

This is going to be a desperately difficult article to write. It is scarcely possible to generalise, and the range of understanding and observation within which any one person must work is restricted. The power of active sympathy in all men would seem to be limited. We can understand only within a certain radius of ourselves. I would like to begin, then, fully realising that no one who has been there who reads this article is likely to agree with more than a proportion of my conclusions. Each chaplain can, of course, only speak for himself, and his own experience. The kind of men he gets into touch with will depend on the kind of man he is. Often we can understand where we don't seem able to make ourselves understood.

One must begin with the admission that the bulk of the men are so far out of touch with modern Christianity and Churchmanship that they have a very vague idea as to what these stand for intellectually and even morally. One would not like to be called a Christian if Christianity meant either spiritually or mentally what many men think it does. If men would remember more, that we are here, as was our Master, not for "those who are whole and need no physician, but those that are sick," and that it is impossible for the most elementary Christian to



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despise anyone, or be shocked in the sense of being repelled, we could do more to help them to a belief in themselves and in God's will and power to help through His servants. It takes a long time to get men to realise that.

The chaplains—how far have they succeeded? how far failed? Well, those words are rather misleading, as applied to a job like ours.

The majority of men, as far as we can tell, are not visibly affected by what we have to say; that is a crude judgment which takes no heed of many things. On the other hand, we know that, through us, power from on high has come to many men.

We alone ever know our real results. We are judged on superficial enough grounds—our personal popularity, our general usefulness; but the real things we cannot, of course, talk about or advertise.

What phrase of journalistic damnation is there that you cannot fairly use of Christ. He failed to "retain His hold on the people"—He failed to "satisfy the legitimate aspirations of Jewish democracy," and so on.

But he left behind a handful of friends whose lives had been lifted to another level. And our work was real in so far as we stirred the ideals in men and made His presence real to them. How are you to measure that?

To illustrate the bafflingly artificial standards whereby one is sometimes judged, the following true story may serve:—I was asked in mess one day whether I believed that all rag-time enthusiasts would go to hell. Thinking, rightly, that "my leg was being pulled," I said that, for the sake of the people in Heaven, I devoutly hoped they did. Well, several people there took me literally, and, I heard afterwards, thought I was "narrow-minded." Morbidity is not restricted to the "unco guid."

The influence of a chaplain over the men depends on one thing—his obvious physical bravery. Every-

one can value courage, for all know the meaning of fear. All things may be forgiven to the chaplain who shows himself prepared to share their dangers; nothing can mitigate the failure of the man who is not. It is safe to say that it would be difficult for a chaplain, who realises what his presence in the line means to the men, not to go up. But sometimes there are obstacles. There has been for some time a systematic attempt to economise officers. Seconds in command, battalion specialists, and a certain proportion of company officers stay out; sometimes the padres are included in this. In many brigades chaplains are not permitted to enter the "line," unless they are definitely sent for. Padres are under the direct orders of the brigadier, and some of these take up the position that a padre can do nothing of his own work in the line, which, so far as definite religious work goes, is, of course, true, and therefore he has no business there, for the line is a series of fortified posts, and getting about is unhealthy. His work rather lies at the aid-posts, coffee-stalls for walking wounded, etc., in the immediate rear. These, of course, being on lines of communication, are often enough as dangerous (I was caught in three intensive bombardments in the first week), but the point is that the bulk of the men are in the line.

When I joined, any dreams I might have had as to not being afraid were soon dispelled; but I took it for granted that one should get up as far as possible for the sake of one's work, and regarded orders to the contrary as of the kind that could be read through the "blind eye." I was rudely disillusioned. The brigadier, himself the bravest of the brave and sincerely behind the chaplain's work, had a "penchant" for obedience. One of my colleagues was sent down under arrest, and threatened with Australia, and the officer responsible for us



told me that if I was killed a court of enquiry would be necessary, and that if it were found that I was killed while directly disobeying orders my pension would be endangered. I don't think now that there was much in that threat, but at the time it seemed a formidable one, for my pension would be the sole provision for my wife and two children. But in many brigades the padre is left free, a rather burdensome freedom, for after all death is a very drastic step, and it is a constant temptation to ask oneself whether a certain risk is worth taking. The dangers of this frame of mind I have pointed out elsewhere. The one great advantage of a padre's position is, as I have noted, the fact that he is the one unofficial element in a stern, hard, official world—the one embodiment of peace, goodwill, and the half-forgotten decencies of life. All sorts and conditions of men will use him as a safety-valve for their more intimate grievances, feelings, and reflections. When I was moved, after returning from an illness, to Corps Troops there were no restrictions on my movements. But it should not be assumed that, because a chaplain does not go into the line, or crawl round the fortified craters, which serve for it, that it is his fault.

As to the religious position, I will put first my one confident generalisation—that it is wise to distrust the conclusions of all who confidently generalise. It is all the more difficult to reach conclusions, because the Australian regards it as absolutely necessary to "bluff" in these things.

In those circumstances wherein men cannot afford to show that they are deeply moved, recklessness must be put on as a covering garment. To pray before going over the top seems to many an attempt to make the best terms possible for yourself after having had your fun. So on a queer point of honour, which it is impossible not to respect, they

refrain, or say they do. To the man whose faith is real, of course, these waiting moments are a bracing of his soul to meet what may be the final ordeal with the clearest possible sense of the divine presence. Some have told me that it is the sudden, almost first, springing into action of a faith that has always lingered in the background of consciousness. Is there a God? Is it possible to feel His presence in pain of mind and body even in the hour of death. Is allegiance offered even now, of any use? "Verily, I say unto you, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." How often must those words have broken through darkness and uncertainty.

I felt very pessimistic and "blue" about my work at first, but grew more and more optimistic as time went on. Sometimes, when rather depressed, a talk with a stretcher bearer in a sap, or a casual conversation on the road, or a quiet and fervent evensong with twenty or thirty men in a barn or dug-out, would make me feel that, after all, the Church was founded on a rock, and that the gates of hell could not prevail. When you do find religion in the army it is the real thing—awful in its quiet sincerity.

The Church has failed quantitatively—there is no room for argument there. But there is as little doubt in my mind that she is succeeding qualitatively—turning out the men that Christ can use—humble-minded, sane, devoted—too shy, maybe, and inarticulate—but solid. The question is not one about the failure of the Church, which is after all an expression of the people's spiritual energies, but what are the causes, and how far they lie within our power—more especially the layman's power—to remedy.

The fighting man is the man in the street who is compelled by the tremendous strain of life to seek foundations. He faces ultimate questions as to the meaning of life, and what it requires of him, not from a detached and speculative standpoint, indefi-



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nately postponing decision, but as one struggling to "find bottom" in a storm of tempestuous reality. And so, utterly cut off from his usual social and intellectual environment (yet to a surprising extent the same man), he tries to achieve a philosophy which shall make something of the facts that crash daily into his consciousness. So, in the midst of deep weariness and enforced idleness, heartbreaking monotony and fierce strain, he strives for an answer to it all. To some men the light comes through the murk, and they see it as sacrifice, co-operation with God in His struggle with free men for the redemption of the world, the struggle with the Cross at its centre and "darkness over the whole earth"; others seem to wander helplessly in the inferno, looking to dissipation as a relief from the constant weariness, sorrow and pain.

To me there seems only the two interpretations, the victorious suffering and pain which God is sharing, the struggle for the world's future in which He is our fighting comrade—or hell, however well regulated for some people—on earth.

The struggle with the Germans is only an incident in the big conflict for the world's redemption. It looks a decisive one—at any rate, it is the job on hand. But we must leave discussion till later. War is a perpetual struggle with oneself. The will is at war with the nervous system, the whole body. Courage is the conquest of fear. War is also an enormous surprise. New and terrible facts strike into the experience of the individual—facts beyond his intellectual grasp, colossal and overpowering as a valley full of guns. Each man must build for his soul an abiding fortress. The frail and defenceless body may be crushed; but that his soul should come out on top, in the fiercest struggle with circumstance that can be conceived, is the first demand that a man's ordinary day's work makes upon him. He has

discipline and comradeship to sustain him, but the ordeal is very fierce. So most men, consciously or otherwise, try to find an eternal citadel within themselves in the midst of their stormy experiences, within which, in weariness of the body, in the strain and storm of nerves, they can with steady will and clear purpose go forward to their day's work. That is why religion has never been equalled as a basis of morale; the drill book recognises that. The feeling that nothing can touch one, unless it be the "Destined Will"—the conviction, binding and strengthening all our acts, that these are a conscious co-operation with His will, that He is present with us always, even unto the end of the world, though that may happen to us any minute—if one can attain to that!

I read lately an article in an English review, by a staff-officer, in which he stated that religious enthusiasm, such as Cromwell's soldiers possessed, in the British army, would be worth many divisions. He seemed to infer that, though the soldier now does all that can be humanly expected of him, touched by that fire, he would do a great deal more.

The man in the line, then, is the man in the street, seeking a philosophy under difficulties. But he is not cut off from his old way of thinking. Back of his mind there are the impressions he came out with, judgments as to the meaning of life, and his relation to the society around him, and to God if he "has felt the need of that hypothesis," and these, however incoherently stated, however fragmentary, narrow, unsatisfactory or inconsistent, determine finally the plan or lack of it, whereby the details of life piece themselves together. A man is, on the whole, allowing for human inconsistency, what he really believes, which is not necessarily what he accepts.

One of the main reasons, I think, why Christianity is not more generally accepted, is that it stops short of completeness as a philosophy. It does not claim



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to be an explanation of all the facts of life (though our theology sometimes attempts to stretch it to cover them). Rather it may be compared to a search-light lighting up the way ahead. Another is the a priori prejudice against theology. Now, theology is the attempt to carry on, ever more completely and satisfactorily, in answer to ever new questions, the age-long effort to define and express men's experience of God. Not final—but a necessary attempt for us all if our religious ideas are to be the generating and controlling power of our acts.

Most men in normal times construct their philosophy of life which is also their theology as a sort of post-impressionism, a vague summing up of the general impression left by the things that happen to them. A philosophy of this kind is necessarily superficial.

Religion is rather our fundamental attitude towards the facts than our emotional re-actions towards them. The free creative individual builds his universe of thought and purpose out of the happenings and conditions that make up raw material of life.

Religion is a method of interpretation, a plan for conquering and transforming facts of victory or defeat, sorrow or joy to serve the highest needs of man. It is not a mood of enjoyment or repulsion or passive acceptance, an intellectual and moral surrender to temperament and events.

To come to practical problems, many men think their faith is reeling because they cannot believe that God caused the war. Having before their eyes the horror, the deliberate waste, the moral insanity, which war produces, they feel they cannot believe in a God like that. This idea of God, as a universal permeating force, a universal, self-consistent activity working through a plastic world, does seem too common in our popular theology; but there is no trace of it in the Christianity of the New Testament. There we find God as a Personality, appealing

(through a great creative act of sacrifice) to free individuals, who are free to accept or reject His love. God, in His relation to men, is a fighting Leader, striving with us for the redemption of a world. The battle is decisive. God is a fighter, so far as we know Him in Christ. Human freedom is the one philosophic doctrine absolutely necessary to Christianity. God has limited His own power by making men free. Freedom to serve, of course means freedom to sin. Freedom is the means and the price of fellowship. He has given us light, if we will open our eyes to see it; help and fellowship, penetrating and complete, if we can trust to it. If we refuse the way of service and sacrifice for comfort, selfishness, power, we must take the consequences.

To the follower of Christ, life is a struggle against the principal of selfishness in its various manifestations. This means that the cause of righteousness must fight to maintain itself in the world. Love which is refused and despised is crucifixion; but if love is militant, and enduring, we believe that it is in the end invincible. "Think not that I come to bring peace. I bring not peace, but a sword." And inner peace is the reward of the man who is doing his duty.

Few people at home realise how many men think they are expected to believe that God caused the war, believing that everything that happens is God's will; whereas there is obviously a great deal in the world that is its contradiction. We don't all see that God's method of acting through human will is relentless, and many of us have incorporated into our theology a lot of mechanical optimism that is no part of Christ's teaching. It is of the essence of Christianity to get God's will done, at whatever cost to ourselves, in a world where it is being defied. It is the highest, bravest, most unselfish, most useful, way to live, a means of conquering sin, and pain, and death, not an explanation of them, except in so far



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as each trial is conceived of as having its corresponding conflict and triumph, which tests and prepares us for the further service, and more perfect fellowship with God.

It is quite true that men are not interested in dogma, in the sense that they are not prepared to accept as starting points the abstract definitions which are necessary to all systematic thinkers. But out of their experience they ask questions, and answer them in their own way, with dogmas of their own, mostly not very satisfactory, or deep, or logical, or powerful in the working out of high and costly ideals. Can we inspire them with sufficient confidence to ask their questions of us? Can we show sympathy and skill in dealing with the beginnings of the quest for religion? The Church in Australia will have to answer that question on a large scale at once. It is so fatally easy to bury one's nose in parish routine, and forget the crude questions and difficulties of men who have only begun to try to find their way home. The missionary activities of the Church will have to be put first. No proposals I have ever seen in print seem to me sufficiently drastic to meet the facts.

Can we find any common, general, religious beliefs? There are two rather striking facts in army psychology. One, already noticed, is a belief in Destiny—"if your name isn't on it, it won't get you;" the other an instinct for prayer in moments of danger. To some this fate is the providence of God; to others it is merely fate; to very few it is chance. This belief does seem to bring peace and steadiness of nerve to men who otherwise would be on the rack. So implicitly is it accepted that it is even the cause of a good deal of carelessness. It will lead men to walk on the parapet of a support trench, instead of ploughing through the mud at the bottom. It is an idea capable, of course, of carrying profound religious meaning. There is somehow linked to it a real

belief that those who have "gone west" are not far away; they are absent, detached for duty elsewhere. The veil of eternity is very thin. So this belief in the communion of saints, held together by common fellowship and purpose, is much more vivid than it is in Church life at home. The dead still seem to belong to the battalion. This feeling is linked with that idea of destiny, and only needs the natural extension to the idea of God calling His own around Him, tested by the fierce trial of this life for the fellowship of service in the life to come.

Personal loss is felt just as deeply on service as at home. "The love passing the love of woman" is the most striking fact in the comradeship of arms. But loss does not seem so final somehow.

I have elsewhere remarked that daily sight of death does not lead men to consider their own lives in the light of eternity. We see death in horrible and grotesque forms, stripped of all its dignity and ritual. We have no space for leisured sorrow. It is an everyday fact, a matter of course. It is no longer awful. It becomes an incident in life. All men are afraid of wounds; not very many men of death, I think, when it comes to the point. A commonplace little procession of men wandering across the duck-boards by Flers, carrying trench material, was the best sermon I ever came across on St. Paul's cry: "O! grave where is thy victory? O! death where is thy sting?"

I remember in my first week watching men going up with rations through the Pozieres barrage, and found it scarcely possible to believe that men could do it all simply and naturally, unless they had some grip of eternity. Doubtless they were told to do it. But there was more in it than that. There seems in all this voluntary sacrifice a deep instinct at work which is part of man's divinity. It is a religion of instinct, which intellect never seems to define. "It's a man's life, anyway." That's the nearest I was ever given to an explanation. Why? Is it because



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the Cross, besides being a fact in history, is an expression of something which is true of the character of God and man?

Our appeal to men must be to live for the fine and heroic in life, to live dangerously for the faith that is in them—not to live in the fear of death—or to worry over much about “getting to heaven” (vile phrase). We lost the conformity of the great mass of the thoughtless at the passing of the fear of hell. We shall never get them back; we can only hope to open the eyes of more and more men again to God’s love, its definiteness, its individuality. We must work out our methods from the start again. Modern Protestantism demands far too much in the way of abstract thought, and personal mysticism, to be possible to the average untrained mind. It can establish no point of contact with the great class of mindless men, whose mentality is only a sounding board for others’ voices. And every schoolmaster knows what a large proportion of the human race this is. Our Lord taught through symbolism, always symbolism of word and action. As Hankey points out, it is the only way to reach the men. A Roman Catholic chaplain in my brigade produced a most powerful expression on the minds of all ranks, by the great risks he ran for the sake of anointing the shattered bodies of some of his flock—in some cases where there was little probability of life being still present. They could understand that. The whole modern tendency in education is to introduce ceremonial more and more into the class room. We must rely more on the symbol of action in life and in liturgy. Cannot Protestantism work out a ritual of its own. It seems to me the duty of every Church, and State, and school, to build highways of righteousness, complete with fences and sign-posts, so that “the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” The weakness of all our modern educational, political, and religious thought, is that it

makes no provision, either by way of discipline or instruction, for the absolute beginner.

But, to get back to our attempt at defining general tendencies of belief in spiritual realities.

I have noted elsewhere the strength of the spirit of brotherhood. We're not consistent in this, as in anything else, and a man will steal a blanket from another man, for whom he would not hesitate to risk his life. But the principle is working all the time, especially in big things. You may see it in the voluntary risks and sacrifices of ration- and water-carriers, the extraordinary daring shown in the rescue of wounded, the persistent shielding of comrades from the consequences of military offences, even where these lead to general hardship, such as the stopping or curtailment of leave, and are condemned by the majority of the men themselves.

I have also mentioned the spirit of all-inclusive charity. There is no censoriousness or condemnation of one's fellows, even though they seem to live on a higher or lower moral plane. Men see clearly enough other men's errors; but the fellowship is unbroken, and in those wonderful cases of real affection there is often a real attempt to help. Living together as we have to, it is necessary to realise that we are all sinners together. We may help each other, but we cannot afford to condemn.

Then I believe that nearly all men pray at moments of acute danger. "We've been praying like hell," is the remark quoted by a chaplain, as heard after a stiff bombardment. It's easy, of course, to dismiss this habit of prayer as a nervous re-action. There is something sub-conscious about it, and with a good many men, the prayer dies as the barrage lifts. Granting all this, is it not profoundly significant that in times of great tension, when a man is fighting himself for peace and a conquering will, that he should naturally, instinctively one may fairly say, throw himself back on God, and seek peace in the



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assurance that the Divine Providence is caring for him, and seek strength in getting into touch with the Divine will?

A stretcher bearer said to me once that he thought the man who had no religion was the bravest man. I asked why, and he replied, "Well, we know God's with us, and eternity is in front. They have nothing." I quoted Belloc's contention that the most conclusive evidence for man's immortality is the nobility with which many men face a belief in nothingness. One sees so much of the fine work done by men who can only "offer to God a patience and a pain." As a matter of fact, few men seem to believe in a real and final death. I have met a good many who were very vague, because they didn't know, and whose ideas were too hazy to influence their actions, or to ennoble their ideas of what this life was for, or to interfere with their enjoying themselves in this life, as seemed good to them when the presence of death was a day or two away.

The old idea of heaven, because at one time we read the Jewish symbols of crown and harp and white robe literally, has been laughed out of court, and the conceptions behind it—victory, harmony, purity—have never been uncovered. Still, for all that, there is little belief in personal annihilation. Many of the commonest difficulties arise, by queer irony, from the fact that men already hold unrecognised Christian ideas, which they regard as contradictory to orthodox notions.

One of the difficulties in the way of the man who has had little instruction is the rather anæmic view he gets of the Personality of Christ through stained-glass windows and treacly hymns. The most prominent thing in the life of Jesus is moral and spiritual courage, and His whole life of service was a fight. Personally, I have never been able to see the "meekness and mildness" of His character.

There is an increasingly popular and demoralis-

ing idea of God as a rather slack old gentleman. "He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well." In foggy emotionalism we lose sight of the tremendous demand and gifts of Christianity.

Another point that troubles men is the idea that if they take on definitely the religious life they are expected to set up as being rather better than other people. Reading the New Testament is the only cure for this. They are also haunted by the idea that they must go on being careful about what not to do—must live cautiously—which is absolutely contradictory to their notions.

But the most serious difficulty is want of faith in themselves. "What's the use of starting something you can't keep up?" is an objection I have heard more than once. It shows honesty, of course, and a frank realisation of the unbreakable connection between morality and religion. But it leaves out the Christian's experience of the fact that God helps.

Then a morbidly exaggerated spirit of individualism and independence is often a difficulty. We have absolutely made a fetish of it in our national psychology. "Thinking for oneself" is absolutely essential to all genuine conviction, but it seems a mistake to begin thinking out a subject by cutting oneself off from its main course of thought and experience. One would not study, say chemistry or motor cars, in that spirit. The difficulties we find ourselves up against have been faced by many greater men, and we may learn much, surely, from their work. Humility, enough to learn from those who have struggled over the same ground is the first condition of getting any kind of knowledge. Only in religion is ignorance considered a fair working basis for drawing one's own conclusions. The lack of sense of tradition does away with the prestige of the Church to a considerable extent. "Tradition," says Chesterton, "is the democracy of the dead." But the utterance and ex-



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perience of our fathers do not reach us out here. In some ways Australia is a new country; in others Australian democracy is a very ancient community, which has lost its historical memory. This works both ways. The Australian's reluctance to adopt any idea, of which he can't see the immediate use, might be a most powerful weapon in the forging of religious truth.

There is a real resentment against the authoritative presentation of ideas as coming from external authority. This does not apply only to religion. It is part of the national sub-consciousness. We must begin at the very beginning—reason and persuade. In our mission work, which must come before everything, we must use the method of discussion, far more than that of exhortation, giving the men more of a share in the discovery of truth.

The immediate psychological influence of war is against us. Men must grow hard and callous to preserve their sanity. And with this comes a resurgence of animalism. Self-control is weakened. Men become the victims of fierce nervous re-actions which lead to all sorts of unaccustomed excesses. It is a temporary state of mind, the hard surface peels off in hospital; but it is hard to penetrate this frame of mind with a message of personal consecration, to the finer things of life. Going up into a barrage to kill Germans so many days a month is necessary, it seems, to the future of the world; but can we wonder that the heavens are blotted out for many men?

The cause of Christianity is bound up in men's minds with that of the Church, and there is no doubt at all that class consciousness has been used against us with deadly and widespread effect. We are made largely responsible for the obvious moral shortcomings of a social order we are supposed to tolerate. I believe there is some truth, mixed up with a good deal more unfairness, in this charge. Elementary Christianity, if adopted as a working basis for busi-

ness and industry, would doubtless revolutionise conditions, and in trying to preach and live it we are doing the best we can. Preaching economics, however, which is an infant and rapidly developing science, is difficult. As far as responsibility for the present order goes we cannot be held responsible for the works of those who reject Christ's leadership, any more than He can be held responsible, at the bar of history, for being "out of touch with the legitimate aspirations of Jewish democracy," in not giving them what they wanted of their Messiah. Still, there are certain moral issues on which we should have hit harder in the past. Christian ethics are only slowly developing from individualism, and we are still handicapped by crippling economic doctrines. But it is part of an honest enquiry into the subject to recognise the present sincerity of a very large proportion of the clergy in these matters, and their determination to understand the facts, and apply their message to them. Their appreciation of some of the present social injustices is sharpened, may be, by the fact that they and the schoolmasters are the chief sufferers under them. It is a bitter thing for a man to realise that his motives are being exploited. But the fact must be recognised that the working man does believe that the Church is a buttress of the system he is out to destroy. He also believes in a materialistic conception of history, and in the redemption of humanity by economic means. Would that Mazzini, not Marx, had become the leader of European socialism. What an invincible brotherhood of idealists and prophets it might have been! Marxism creates its own opposition in character as stubbornly and entirely materialistic as itself. The blazing idealism of Mazzini, deriving its enormous force from the ideas of brotherhood, duty, and the will of God, which could survive twenty years' starvation on potatoes in the Euston Road, and be the most powerful creative factor in Italian inde-



pendence. What could have withstood that? That intensely spiritual and religious conception of society—what could have defeated that if the working classes had fought for it? Mazzini based his whole social philosophy on duty, justice, responsibility, brotherhood, the will of God. The economic reforms he conceived of as an absolutely necessary result of his philosophy, but he did not find in economic motives a complete philosophy of life.

It is not generally realised what a great proportion of our population is uninfluenced by the teachings of Christ, simply because they are unacquainted with them.

We have most of the raw materials for a complete and splendid national interpretation of Christianity in the consciousness of young Australia in the army. But the spirit of self-criticism is absent. We don't want to develop in ways different from our present ones. And we don't realise the unworthiness of some of the things raised up with it. We are supremely satisfied with a type which has proved that it possessed abundantly the difficult moral qualities necessary to defeat the Germans. But the demands of peace are as exacting. Here beauty of inner life, sweetness and light, kindness, consideration, enthusiasm for humanity, self-control—all the fruits of some moral and spiritual education—courage, self-sacrifice, duty; these are the supreme things, but this supremacy of the spirit needs to be extended to cover the whole of a man's conduct. Men without some instinctive sense of beauty in life and conduct, must find their pleasures in strong, physical excitement. And these pleasures, without law, consideration, or restraint, are frightfully destructive of spiritual life. What do we need, then, further? First, the broad, uncompromising, thorough-going principle of brotherhood in Church and State, which Jesus insisted on in the words, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." And "Love ye one an-

other even as I have loved you," unflinchingly carried out into practical details, and directed to the working out of life's finest ideals. Then the discipline of consecration. We see daily the wonderful level of achievement at which men can live and work when they have a great and definite purpose to lift them up to it. The purpose has complete authority over them within its own domain. Outside that it influences the rest of their lives not at all. Men do their work magnificently in the forward area—"pour out their souls unto death"—but further back this purpose of fighting Germans for what they know to be the future of the world does not even lead many men to protect themselves. The purpose is a great highway through the desert. But the level to which they rise shows what human nature can achieve with something definite to live and die for. We have a fine fighting idealism in the A.I.F., a determination that the world shall be a better place to live in. There is ground for boundless optimism in the fact that the fine things in human nature are there, requiring only to be expressed and linked to great causes. Here, I think, the Church may fairly claim stronger and more definite help from the Press. The idealist is being shouted down. Can we extend the idea of consecration to God and humanity to cover the whole of life? It is discipline and inspiration. How else can it grip, save in the sense of love and devotion to a living and fighting Comrade and Saviour, whose love for them stops at nothing—a love deep, practical, immediate—to which their lives must be a response?

The Church, too, must realise that she is being challenged and questioned on the basis of her own claims, to represent the will of God, and express the inmost life of the people by an awakening national consciousness. We must lead. There is no alternative.





